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Family-operated Barlow Lock and Security, Inc. offers companies and homeowners peace of mind through a broad array of security and surveillance systems.

“The business was started over five decades ago in Dieterich by my father, Floyd,” said Cathy Bierman, who currently runs the business. “We’ve been in our current location in Effingham for 19 years.” Bierman’s sons Zak and Kurt work in the shop as well.

The business has grown over the years with an emphasis on security and surveillance systems. An incident with the company’s founder actually led to the creation of the business.

“Floyd ran an appliance store in Dieterich,” said Cathy. “Someone broke into the business, so he installed his first security system in that business.”

The company has expanded with technology, like remote view camera systems. Today, customers of Barlow can have custom systems set up at their businesses and residences. Immediate notifications and monitoring are available on smart phones and electronic devices.

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Roy Schmidt Honda is leaping into the 6th year of business in the Effingham area! What an interesting year of 2020, and one thing remains the same...the commitment from Roy Schmidt Honda that will ensure each customer’s complete service or sales satisfaction.

Roy Schmidt Honda’s service PARTS team claimed the “Customer Service Experience” award, and also the “Fixed First Visit” award. Achieving these awards magnify the service team’s consistent dedication to delivering the highest level of service in the industry. Customer retention is more essential than ever today, and the staff at Roy Schmidt Honda would like to thank our customers for their trust in the products and services we offer. Roy Schmidt Honda service department finished the year in 1st place in our District with 97.7% satisfaction rate.

Roy Schmidt Honda sales professionals will assist you upon your arrival at the dealership and introduce you to the wonderful world of Honda vehicles! The Honda sales team rallies behind an “All star” line up of vehicles including: The 2021 Accord which was named to the Car & Driver 10 Best List, the Civic named Kelley Blue Book Best Compact Car, the CRV named Kelley Blue Book Best Buy Compact SUV, the Passport which received Best 2-row SUV for families from U.S. News & World and the Odyssey was named Kelley Blue Book Best Buy Mini Van and Best Mini Van for Family... and the Honda all star line up of vehicles continues with the Honda Ridgeline truck with great features for the outdoors person, and an all new aggressive appearance package... a must see!!! Also check for the 5 star safety rating on your favorite Honda vehicle!

Roy Schmidt has been a life long resident of the Effingham area, and Roy continues to demonstrate his commitment to the community by supporting numerous organizations and church families.

Roy Schmidt and the Honda Team appreciate all of the many people who have visited the dealership for sales and service these past 6 years. In the closing of the year 2020 and entering into 2021, we will remember: “WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER”!

Roy Schmidt
Owner/Dealer

Effingham Progress 21.indd   6
2/11/21   10:47 AM
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Winner
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US News & World Report
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2021 Honda Civic

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Kelley Blue Book
“Best Compact Car”

2021 Honda Odyssey

Winner
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Scott’s Building Center

Scott’s Building Center History

Under several names and a few ownership changes along the way, Scott’s Building Center in Greenup has a long and storied history.

The business now known as Scott’s Building Center was founded by T.J. Prather in Toledo at some point before 1900. Prather sold the business to Henry Tippett, who in turn sold it to Kelley & Wisely. Armour Grain Co., doing business as the Neola Elevator Company, bought the business in 1910 and hired young E.B. Cutts to manage the lumberyard. Cutts eventually bought the business in 1923 and operated it for many years some of those in partnership with young Garnet Grafton of Lerna.

Mr. Cutts eventually bought out Grafton after World War II and continued much as he had for decades until training young Bob Scott to manage the Toledo Builders Supply in 1957.

Prior to working at Toledo Builders Supply Bob Scott was a motorpool clerk in the Air Force which he served from 1953-1955. After the Air Force, he worked at Shanks driving oil trucks and making culverts.

Bob Scott purchased the business in 1963 and, later Bob purchased Greenup Builders Supply when it went up for sale in 1964. He ran both locations until 1974 when he closed Toledo and moved it to Greenup. The name Scott’s Building Center came about approximately in 1974, when Bob bought out Bill & Joann Easton (Greenup Builders Supply).

In 1965 Bob started a construction company named CHI Construction Company and changed the name to Ervin, Scott, and Easton Construction Company. Approximately 1971 he sold the construction company to Carroll Ervin.

In 1978 at the current location, Bob started the new lumberyard. He opened for business on January 21st, 1980. At 43,688 square feet, the current location is several times the size of the old Greenup location.

After he retired in 1997, he created Scott’s Flooring Company.

Scott’s Building Center changed hardware suppliers in the past:
- Belknap Hardware Company: Mid 60’s-1971
- Bostwick Braun Hardware: 1971-1981
- Ace Hardware: 1981-2007
- Do it Best: 2007- Present

Scott’s Building center also buys from many other vendors.

In 2017, Bob Scott celebrated 60 years being in business. We had a big celebration here at Scott’s Building Center on July 29th, 2017.

With the passing of Bob Scott in December 2018, Bob’s son Kurt Scott and daughter Barb Ozier co-owned the business, until November 2019 when Kurt bought out Barb of full ownership of the lumberyard.

Today Scott’s Building Center employs 14, evenly split between full and part-time. The third generation of Scott’s: Kurt’s son Matthew is Assistant Manager. Kurt’s daughter Kristan does General Sales, Booking, & Advertising.
**Matthew’s Story**

I started working part-time at the yard in 2006 and started working at Evapco in 2006 too. I was in 4-H till I was 18. Graduated from Cumberland High School in 2006. Rode on floats as a little kid with my sister, brother & cousins. Helped my sister Kristan build floats for the parades. Became full-time at the yard in 2007, learning the business, helping my grandpa Bob and my father. Helped with the change from Ace to Do it Best in 2007. I have built up the Milwaukee department, and know I’m one of the biggest Milwaukee dealers in the area.

I started on the Greenup Volunteer Fire Department in 2017. I’m also on the Cumberland Co. Sportsman’s Club Board. I’m currently the Assistant Manager at the yard.

**Kurt’s Story**

I started at Toledo Builders Supply sweeping driveways when I would get into trouble at the age of 6 or so. My sister Barb and I would get to help with inventory and checking addition on tapes against inventory sheets every year. I tagged along with contractors watching mostly in 4th grade, had a hammer put in my hand putting on roofing, drywall, and plywood at Richard Redfern’s in 6th grade.

Helped build Neal Tire, Duplex House and Weaver hog barn my 7th grade summer. Assisted my uncle Bobbie on various projects my 8th grade summer. Painted St. John’s barn, repaired corn cribs west of Hidalgo. My freshmen summer worked the new John Deere building. Dad sold construction business that year and I worked at lumberyard now called Toledo/Greenup Builders Supply till after I graduated college. Spring of 1999 I taught Building Trades at Cumberland. Next year taught Industrial Art at Mascoutah Jr & Sr. High. Summer of 1980 worked for 2 months at Wickes Lumber in Decatur part-time. Left and went to Furrow Building Material in Champaign from summer of 1980 to Aug 1984. Started as a truck driver, to estimating sales counter, to yard supervisor. I had worked part-time at SBC during a period I was also teaching & working at Wickes and Furrows.

My dad offered me a full time job in Aug. 1984, I came back to help run SBC mostly in sales till 1996, when dad got sick and I stepped in as interim manager. Dad retired in 1997 and I managed the yard till my dad passed away in Dec. 2018. My sister & I jointly owned SBC till Nov. 2019, and then I became full owner of SBC. My children Kristan, Michael & Matthew have all worked at the yard similar to myself from early ages. Kristan has recently started working full time at the yard helping with advertising & sales, Matthew has been full time at the yard since college, and is learning the business. He fills the roll of Asst. Manager. I’m a 1974 graduate of Cumberland High School.

**Kristan’s Story**

I started working part time here in 1996 when I was 16. Answering phones, helping with inventory & helping customers. When I was a little kid I would help my Grandpa Bob & Grandma Rose on floats for parades. My 2 brothers Michael & Matthew would also help & ride in parades. After Grandma Rose passed away in Sept. of 1998, we didn’t do any floats, but I continued helping at the yard. May of 2008 was my 1st float building and designing. We got 1st place in the Toledo Spring Festival Parade. We have continued putting floats together for parades. After Grandpa Bob passed away in Dec. 2018, I have not done a float for any parades. We did one for the Mardi Gras Parade in Greenup in 2019. We were Grand Marshalls of the parade in Loving Memory of Bob Scott. We have been in parades since then with a lumberyard truck. In all the years I have worked 2 jobs: Wal-Mart & County Market. I am finally in the place I’m meant to be at, helping my dad & my brother Matthew.

I’m finally able to get a Rewards program going, working on the website, facebook page, advertising, and learning the paint machine. If there is one thing that my Grandpa Bob would tell you, you have to have a good relationship with your customers and community. I’m a 1998 Graduate of Cumberland High School and was in Cumberland Co. 4-H till I was 18.

Community involvement:
- Toledo American Legion Auxiliary: Treasurer & Secretary
- Toledo American Legion: Military & VA Packages
- Cumberland Co. Fair Association: Secretary & Treasurer
- Cumberland Co. Fair Pageant Crew
- Cumberland Co. Historical Society
- Cumberland Co. Veterans Monument
- Lifetime Member of Girl Scouts
- Greenup Fall Festival Pageant Crew
- Lifetime Member of Girl Scouts
- Greenup Fall Festival Pageant Crew

**Scott’s Building Center**

The Scott’s
Kristian, Michael, Bob, Kurt & Matthew
Picture was taken October 2018
Effingham Ambulatory Surgery Center

Every Day Giving Excellence

Effingham Ambulatory Surgery Center is located at 904 W. Temple in Effingham and is a fully licensed, certified, and accredited outpatient surgery center. The center is known as a same day surgery center and surgeries are performed that do not require an overnight stay. Because it is a smaller facility, it is more affordable and conveniently located, as well as being able to offer more personalized care with shorter waiting periods, all within a clean, comfortable environment. Their highly trained professionals perform a broad range of outpatient surgical procedures and strive to care for every patient and their family as if they were their own. When combined with their state-of-the-art equipment, the care delivered is of the highest quality and safety. The team at Effingham Ambulatory Surgery Center has worked hard to achieve their exceptionally high patient satisfaction rate and growth and it shows with their most recent Pinnacle of Excellence Award, given for achieving exceptional patient experience scores for 3 consecutive years.

The Surgery Center understands that any type of surgery can be intimidating, and that is why they do everything they can to ease any concerns and ensure your trust. This includes providing state-of-the-art equipment and highly trained surgeons, doctors, nurses, and staff members. Your family members will appreciate the easily accessible waiting rooms, and you will appreciate their comfortable surgical suites.

Unlike other larger surgical facilities, they have a small, focused team dedicated to their patients’ experience. Their providers get to know each patient’s medical history and background so that they can provide the most individualized care possible.

The vision of a local ambulatory surgery facility began with the humble aspirations of a local family doctor. He knew his community would truly benefit from a patient-centric “hometown” surgery center. The Effingham Ambulatory Surgery Center did its first surgery in January 1995. In 2005, the building was expanded in order to better facilitate privacy, comfort and convenience for the patients. The services at the center have continued to flourish making the Effingham Ambulatory Surgery Center a facility of excellence.

In November 2020, it was named a 2020 Pinnacle of Excellence Award Winner by Press Ganey. The Pinnacle of Excellence Award recognizes top-performing health care organizations that have achieved the ninety fifth percentile or above of performance in Patient Experience for 3 years in a row. This award is a nationally recognized symbol of achievement of the highest order in health care. It is presented annually and honors clients who have consistently performed in the top 5% of all Press Ganey clients for each of the reporting periods during the course of the year. The Surgery Center won the award in 2018 and 2019.

According to Jeany Dunaway, RN, CASC, Administrator, the award represents an important recognition from the industry’s leaders in measuring, understanding and improving the patient experience. Dunaway also states that the Center strives to be a Center of Excellence and that is demonstrated by how the patients are treated, much like a member of their own family.

Attention to detail is of the utmost importance and is demonstrated through their impressive infection control rates and patient satisfaction rating. In the last five years EASC has done over 32,000 cases and their surgical site infection rate remains under 0.11%. These rates were this low because of the superior attention to the care of each wound and fully explaining the at-home instructions upon discharge. Additionally, they ensure their facility is as clean as possible in order to exceed industry standards and prevent the spread of diseases.

Effingham Ambulatory Surgery Center serves a large portion of central Illinois providing surgical services to patients in the specialties of podiatry, general surgery, endoscopy, orthopedics, hand surgery, plastics, ophthalmology, gynecology, ENT, urology pain management and oral maxillofacial surgery. EASC also boasts a high quality anesthesia team with two full time anesthesiologists and two nurse anesthetists. They have 29 surgeons on staff along with 60 employees.

The mission statement of the Effingham Ambulatory Surgery Center is to provide first class surgical services for the community in a safe, comfortable and welcome environment; one in which they would be happy to treat their own families. EASC is committed to assuring the choice of the highest quality care delivered with compassion and respect in an environment centered around patient comfort and confidentiality. Their excellent patient satisfaction, infection control and safety rates are a reflection of just how much they adhere to their mission statement.

Be sure to visit them at effinghamsurgerycenter.com or follow them on twitter and facebook.
THE EFFINGHAM AMBULATORY
Surgery Center
exceptional people • exceptional care

Proud Recipients of the
2020
Pinnacle of Excellence Award

The Pinnacle of Excellence Award recognizes top-performing clients from healthcare organizations nationwide on the basis of extraordinary achievement and consistently high levels of excellence for at least three years in Patient Experience.

The Pinnacle of Excellence Award recognizes top-performing health care organizations that have achieved the 95th percentile or above of performance in Patient Experience. Presented annually, the award honors clients who consistently sustained performance in the top 5% of all Press Ganey clients for each reporting period during the course of one year.

“To receive this award for the third year in a row, is such an honor! We have a fantastic team of physicians, nurses and supporting staff that live our mission of treating our patients like a member of our family and striving to provide excellent care! We are fortunate in a small community to have such availability to fantastic healthcare and we are beyond excited to provide this to our neighbors. We realize that in healthcare our patients have a choice and we are honored and grateful to be able to care for them at a facility that is in the top 5 percent in the nation.”

~ Jeany Dunaway, RN, CASC, Administrator

Partners:
Ruben Boyajian, MD, General Surgery
James Flag, DO, General Surgery
James Graham, DPM, Podiatrist
Kelly Haller, MD, Gynecologic Surgery
John Kay, MD, Ophthalmology
Lisa Kowalski, MD, General Surgery
Frank Lee, MD, Orthopedic Surgery
Kevin Malone, MD, General Surgery
Jason McAllaster, DO, General Surgery
Nash Naam, MD, Hand Surgery
Brian Ogan, MD, Pain Management
Sarah Bush Lincoln
Lisa Sasso, MD, Hand Surgery
Joseph Spraul, MD, Ophthalmology
Patrick Stewart, MD, Hand Surgery
Jay Swanson, DDS, Oral Maxillofacial Surgery
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FEATURE STORY

Jarrett and Abby Grewell and their son Kolt stand outside their home in Dieterich’s Hartke Subdivision. The village has created housing to spur other opportunities.

40 Village Boom: Dieterich’s blueprint for growth

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ON THE COVER:
Norma Lansing, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce. Becky Brown, Membership Director. Nicole Morrison, Director of Marketing & Communications. Jamie Niemerg, Office Manager. Photo by Chet Piotrowski, Jr. / Piotrowski Studios.

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Please recycle when you’re done with it!
It’s hard to imagine an Effingham County Chamber of Commerce without Norma Lansing at the helm. We’ll have to do more than imagine it in April, when Lansing is scheduled to retire after more than four decades with the organization — three of them in charge of it.

Look no further for evidence of her leadership than that trophy Lansing is holding on the cover of the 2021 Progress edition of the Effingham Daily News. In September, our chamber won the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives’ Chamber of the Year award — that group’s most prestigious and competitive award.

That kind of leadership has been crucial as we navigate with the rest of the nation and the world the challenges of a global pandemic.

This year’s Progress charts in part the myriad ways our community met that challenge in 2020 and will continue to do so in 2021. But the magazine also chronicles the way planning and determination laid the foundation for success long before anyone ever heard of COVID-19.

The tiny Village of Dieterich has found a formula for success by attracting people to live there with the lure of attractive and reasonably priced housing.

Meanwhile, the Effingham Regional Growth Alliance got its start in the 1940s. Lately, it’s been seeking new ways to boost our economy — and with it, our area’s quality of life.

One of the biggest and shiniest projects underway is the new Sarah Bush Lincoln Bonuti Clinic. The $35 million facility is being built behind the existing clinic on West Evergreen Avenue in Effingham and will feature state-of-the-art equipment when it opens in 2022.

Meanwhile, officials at HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital say the pandemic created opportunities for the hospital to improve its practices and expand on some that were already in place. It also strengthened relationships the hospital had with the community and other health care systems. The result? Innovate care for patients that the hospital plans to continue into 2021.

Those and other stories — along with advertising that showcases the companies and organizations that make our area thrive — can be found throughout the pages of Progress.

Jeff Long

Jeff Long is the editor of the Effingham Daily News. A 1987 graduate of the University of Wisconsin, he has worked for newspapers in England, Pennsylvania and Virginia. For 13 years, he was a reporter and later an editor at the Chicago Tribune. He lives in Altamont with his wife, Karen.

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**Staff Bios**

**Cathy Griffith** is news editor of the Effingham Daily News. She is a 1998 graduate of Eastern Illinois University with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism. She has worked at the Daily News for 20 years in news and magazine publications. She is a lifelong resident of Effingham, where she resides with her husband, Tim, and daughter, Leah.

**Andrew Adams** is a reporter for the Effingham Daily News, covering Effingham City Hall, Effingham Community Schools Unit 40. He earned a bachelor’s degree in science journalism from the Illinois Institute of Technology in 2020. He wrote for publications in Chicago and Champaign covering local politics and community organizations before finding his way down to Effingham.

**Charles Mills** is a reporter and videographer for the Effingham Daily News. A 1983 graduate of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, he is the son of a south-central Illinois newspaper publisher, worked as master control director for a St. Louis television station, assistant video editor at a video editing facility on Music Row specializing in music-videos, served as senior video editor for a Nashville television station and learned the art of computerized video editing while living in Hollywood, California in the middle 80s. Mills is a native of Vandalia, where he lives with his wife, Zoryana.
After more than four decades with the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce — three of those decades at its helm — the group’s President and CEO Norma Lansing is stepping down. But she’s not stopping her work until the day she has to.

Lansing began her work with the chamber as a volunteer, and in 1976 started as a “very part-time” receptionist before working as an administrative assistant and eventually as its leader.

In that time, she helped professionalize the organization, double the chamber’s membership, and expand it from a citywide group to covering the whole county.

Now, as her retirement at the end of April approaches, she doesn’t want to slow down.

“I’m not gonna sit back and wait for my retirement date to come,” Lansing said.

She has been working toward her retirement and a transition plan with the chamber’s board of directors for nearly two years. In that time, she has focused on growing the notoriety and programming of the chamber.

One of the ways she does that is by competing for — and winning — prestigious awards and recognition for the chamber.

Recognition

In September 2020, the local chamber won the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives’ Chamber of the Year award. According to the association’s website, Chamber of the Year is its most prestigious and competitive award.

The association has a membership of 7,500 chamber of commerce professionals, 1,300 chambers of commerce and hundreds of other businesses and organizations, according to its website.

Winning the award was a proud moment for Lansing — and one that was hard fought. In her office, she has a copy of the application for the award: A spiral bound booklet nearly an inch thick with glossy pages highlighting the chamber’s members and programs.

“It’s quite an involved process, actually,” Lansing said. “It’s not easy.”

A core part of the application process that earned the chamber the honor was a review of two of its programs. Lansing and her team submitted descriptions of Manufacturing Day and Axis at 109 West.

Manufacturing Day, launched in 2014, provides a day for high school students throughout the county, usually about 300 of them, to tour manufacturing businesses and learn about career options in industry and the trades.

Axis at 109 West was a co-working space in downtown Effingham that featured modern colorful furniture. The project allowed people to pay a “drop-in” fee or a regular membership fee to be able to use the space for their work or business. After just a few months of operation during the COVID-19 pandemic, the venture had to shut its doors because not enough people were using it.

“We haven’t given up on the idea,” Lansing said.

She wants to bring back the program with a new focus on business incubation, not just as a place to work. This shift will bring more opportunities for professional growth and networking, topics that feature...
Norma Lansing plans to retire in April from her position as President and CEO of the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce.

frequently in Lansing’s goals. The chamber also recently received the Seven Seals Award from the Illinois Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, an office of the state’s Department of Defense. The award recognizes businesses that support people who serve in the National Guard and Reserve through accommodating hiring practices and by training managers and staff to respond to the needs for time off that come with serving.

Changes

While the chamber spent much of 2020 being recognized for its work, it didn’t entirely escape the effects of COVID-19. The pandemic has forced chamber officials to rethink many of their long-standing programs.

They’ve had to cancel in-person events and delay the chamber’s annual gala to avoid hosting it during this winter’s statewide mitigations.

Still, Lansing says the chamber was able to manage these changes without taking too big of a hit.

“We came out of 2020 looking pretty good,” she said.

Even though they were able to manage, Lansing said she’s hopeful about aid coming in the future. The newest round of financial pandemic relief offered through the Small Business Administration’s Paycheck Protection Program includes groups like the Chamber of Commerce. Lansing plans to apply for aid. Last year, the only aid that the chamber received was a $4,000 grant from the state of Illinois.

“Our goal is not to be the first in line,” she said, acknowledging she didn’t want to take money away from small businesses that might need the money more than the chamber.

As Lansing leaves the chamber, she’s still starting programs that she wants to continue after she’s gone. One example is to encourage others to start peer-to-peer groups under the chamber’s umbrella.

“Business After Hours is probably not what’s important to most business people,” she said, softly critiquing one of the chamber’s past networking programs.

Instead, these peer-to-peer groups offer a loosely structured venue for businesspeople to network, socialize, and share information. Already, the chamber has laid the groundwork for a small business owners group and a women in business group.

“It’s by members, for members, really,” Lansing said.

Lansing also formed a project that she’s been thinking about for years: A diversity and inclusion initiative.

“After all the division last summer, I said, ‘We have to do this,’” Lansing said. “To me, it’s not about division. It’s about acceptance and welcoming.”

She said that the phrase “diversity and inclusion” can make some people uncomfortable.

The goal, according to Lansing, is to make sure people know where to go when they need something.

“People have all different kinds of needs,” she said. “Where would I go to get my hair done if I need specialized products or services? Where can I find food from my home culture?”

Prima Torbeck, the owner of Heartland Health Food, a store specializing in healthy food and difficult-to-find produce, has been involved in developing the initiative.

“I don’t have a role per se,” she said. “Just to be a community resource and for people to have a point of contact.”

Torbeck believes the initiative is necessary for people new to the Effingham community, like immigrants or people coming into town for work.

“Our goal is to match folks with services and assistance,” Torbeck said.

Though the ideas have morphed and changed as the project has gotten started, there are a few plans that are being put into action.

The first is trying to find a way to
connect people to translation services. This is designed to meet the needs of the people in Effingham who may speak English as a second or third language or for those with little comfort speaking the language. “People new to the community can get help with translation services. It’s multi-leveled: Finding a restaurant, finding a doctor that speaks your language, a mom with a one-year-old finding other people,” Torbeck said.

This push for translation has resulted in groups around Effingham taking a look at how they handle language barriers, including the Effingham Public Library working to offer multi-lingual services to its patrons.

“The chamber needs to reach out to the community beyond just the businesses,” said Lansing.

Community

As part of that goal, the people working on the diversity and inclusion initiative have started collaborating with postal workers to distribute postcards when people move to town.

“The postal workers, they are the ones that really know who’s coming and going,” Torbeck said. “Everyone gets mail. Reaching them at home? That’s the key.”

Lansing said these postcards will contain information about “critical services” like medical care, electricity service, plumbing and other common needs.

“Along with that, we’re planning to create a welcome basket,” Lansing said.

The baskets, available at the chamber, will contain things like coupons and promotions for area businesses and further information.

“We’re kind of the ‘welcome mat’ for Effingham,” Lansing quipped.

One of the most ambitious elements of the push for a welcoming community is a new app built for the community, not for business owners.

The app was designed to help people find services or connect them with businesses they need. It is being funded through the chamber’s nonprofit foundation and through grant money, such as the $5,000 grant the foundation received from the South-eastern Illinois Community Foundation.

Lansing said the app should be ready to launch in the next few months.

Andrew Evans, a designer with the marketing and brand consulting firm Imagine This!, has also been involved in the project, offering his services as a graphic designer.

“Norma reached out and asked my help to craft the brand voice,” Evans said. “The project itself is designed to drive inclusivity.”

Evans has worked with the chamber before, offering his services for other projects. But he said this one is different.

“It’s far more about being quiet and listening,” he said. “It’s been nice to tap into other people in the community and hear their experiences.”

Evans added that there is more room for people interested in joining the task force. In particular, he would like to see more people who are multilingual or who use American Sign Language.

With its longtime leader nearing retirement, change is in the air at the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce. Even as Lansing is getting ready to leave, her legacy and projects will continue with support from the community and from active volunteers.
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THE ALLIANCE EYES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

By Andrew Adams

Building a community is a tricky task. There are different people vying for influence, businesses competing and collaborating with each other, and various levels of government that have different responsibilities.

But some organizations take on the challenge. The Effingham Regional Growth Alliance, usually just called The Alliance, is the latest name for a group that has its roots in the 1940s.

Starting out as the Effingham Civic Foundation, the group focused on ensuring the city had amenities to support the needs of its growing population. It played instrumental roles in rebuilding St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital after the 1949 fire, creating the first library in Effingham, bringing World Color Press to Effingham in 1969, and building the city’s South Industrial Park, according to Hank Stephens, a current Alliance board member who was involved with the Civic Foundation.

Rebranding

The Civic Foundation rebranded in the early 2010s, first to the Effingham Economic Development Foundation and then to its current name, which reflects a shift in focus from civic improvement to economic development.

Since rebranding, the organization has had a few false starts, with projects that went nowhere, like the short-lived Axis co-working space in downtown Effingham. With an abrupt exit in 2019 by its former President and CEO, Craig A. Nielson, the organization faced a 20-month leadership vacuum. In spite of this, The Alliance has entered an ambitious “building phase.”

Enter Courtney Yockey. As the new President and CEO of The Alliance, Yockey is excited to bring his experience to the organization. The new leader of The Alliance is a veteran of economic development, having led the Richland County Development Corporation (RCDC) for seven years before coming to Effingham.

Yockey has also served on the boards of various development groups, including the Southeastern Alliance of Illinois, U.S. Route 50 Four-Lane Coalition and Richland County CEO Program.

Yockey holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Illinois, a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and Entrepreneurship from Quincy University, and has taken certification courses with the Midwest Community Development Institute and International Economic Development Council.

“I always feel like I’m an entrepreneur at heart,” said Yockey. “I worked with my predecessor at the RCDC to develop several business ideas.”

In his new role, Yockey is staying focused on the reason he was hired.

“The ultimate goal is job creation and growing the economic base,” said Yockey. “Workforce development is a huge part of it.”

Looking forward

Yockey’s arrival on the scene has other people involved with The Alliance excited for the group’s future. Among them is Hank Stephens, who is an Effingham City Commissioner and a member of The Alliance’s board.

“Courtney brings a willingness to work with everybody,” Stephens said. “He really gets it.”

That willingness, Stephens said, is critical for the future of The Alliance.

“I would suggest that from the outset, there has been resistance to The Alliance,” Stephens said. “Iprecedentedly, we had a council, a mayor and a staff that’s ready to work with The Alliance,” Stephens said. “There’s new people involved.”

Beyond the hopeful idea of working together, Stephens

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pointed to a few projects that are in their early stages and have yet to be announced. “We’re always looking at prospects. We have one that would be huge,” he said. “I’m fairly hopeful that we may have tangible results in the next year.” (Though he said that it’s more likely Effingham will see the results of The Alliance’s work in five to 10 years, or even longer.)

This collaborative atmosphere is a key part of The Alliance’s plans. In January, the group asked the city of Effingham to contribute $100,000 to The Alliance. This is an increase from the last time The Alliance came to the city for a contribution — it asked for $50,000 in 2017.

Mark Mayhood, the chair of The Alliance’s board and owner of Northside Ford Lincoln, says that this money will be critical. “The money allows us to go further and reach more people,” he said. “That money is going to allow us to go searching further out.”

Mayhood brought up discussions The Alliance has had with multinational corporations in places such as Germany. These conversations, he said, help bring those corporations to Effingham.

Yockey added that the money will fund inbound and outbound marketing efforts, things like mailers and content streams, which will boost the brand not only of The Alliance but of Effingham County’s business community and economy. “We’ll try to do white papers, get some case studies, try to do a podcast,” he said.

Collaboration

Yockey stressed the importance of relationship building in these stages of re-establishing The Alliance as a major player in city development.

Past projects that The Alliance has taken on, to varying degrees of success, include optioning land and developing housing.

One of those projects, Self-Help Housing in Dieterich, which gained speed in 2018, was a partnership between Illinois Affordable Housing and The Alliance to create a program in which four individual homeowners help in the construction of each other’s homes.

The Alliance also tried to develop a housing project on the south end of Effingham with Billy and Florence Genaust. But that ended due to issues surrounding zoning regulations in the area. “We’re trying to do work for developers,” said Mayhood, stressing that they didn’t want to develop land themselves, but make it easier for others to do so.

Housing is one of the focuses of The Alliance because it’s necessary to grow the number of workers in town. “Our current workforce is pretty depleted,” said Mayhood.

Prior to the pandemic, Effingham County had an unemployment rate of 2.4%. As of December, it had recovered from its high of 14% to around 4%, according to the latest data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

Stephens has helped lead public-private partnerships in Effingham since the 1980s through his various roles with the city, Civic Foundation, and The Alliance. He believes that all of this taken together is cause for optimism. “It’s been tough. We haven’t had all the wins we had at one time. We can’t just throw up our hands. We can be successful. You just have to work a little harder and work a little smarter,” Stephens said.

In the past, the city and its economic development professionals have “waited for the phone to ring,” according to Stephens. Those days are gone. “I think we’re doing something today that will allow this town to succeed,” Stephens said.

“The ultimate goal is job creation and growing the economic base. Workforce development is a huge part of it.”

Courtney Yockey
President and CEO
Effingham Regional Growth Alliance

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A look into the company website at utzarchitects.com establishes the portfolio of work, photos & process they follow to satisfy clients. In addition, is a biography of the team Utz has established. His business model and philosophy is to continually look into the future of technology and the constant stream of forefront improvement.

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The clinic is located at 408 Keller Dr., Effingham, and offers business hours of 7:30 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday, 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 7:30 a.m.-noon Saturday. They also offer 24-hour emergency service, and are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Effingham Veterinary Clinic is your go-to stop for high-quality pet diagnostics, among other services offered. Whether your pet is sick, hurt or just needs preventative care, Effingham Veterinary Clinic can offer the services needed in one stop.

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They provide services such as full lab work, digital X-rays, ultrasound, therapeutic laser, and blood and urine analysis. From spaying and neutering to extensive surgery and orthopedics, as well as farm services, it is all available at Effingham Veterinary Clinic.

Whether you need a health certificate or a health diagnosis of your farm animal, count on the professionals at Effingham Veterinary Clinic to provide it for you. They offer a host of services like general surgery, immunization, general animal wellness, pet wellness, advanced vet services, animal hospital intensive care, large animal care, farm service, equine care, cow care and pig care.

The veterinarians at Effingham Veterinary Clinic are compassionate and always strive to provide the highest quality of care to all of their pet patients. Pet wellness is one of the top priorities for the staff at Effingham Veterinary Clinic, as well as making sure that your expectations are exceeded with the quality of service you receive and making sure that every experience has the personal touch and commitment that goes above and beyond.

One of the main reasons Effingham Veterinary Clinic continues to stand out in its field is because of its innovative and sustainable veterinary care for most species. The staff uses the latest veterinary techniques and best practices in veterinary care.

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Effingham County Chamber of Commerce

The Effingham County Chamber of Commerce was named 2020 national Chamber of the Year in 2020, the only globally recognized industry award that honors top chambers of commerce. The award recognizes the leadership role chambers have in their communities along with their organizational strength and community impact.

As the leading business development organization in Effingham County, the Chamber offers business support and community outreach designed to strengthen local businesses and stimulate the regional economy. In response to the pandemic in 2020, the Chamber created new value for businesses with virtual programming, more online information, and focused COVID-19 resources. A Support for Small Business Grant program supplied much needed funding for six small businesses to keep them operational while their doors to the public were closed.

Connecting businesses to the community is a key role for the Chamber. Shop Local initiatives continue to be expanded and a new email marketing program offering business operational updates, promotions, coupons, and job opportunities is sent directly to resident inboxes weekly.

Community outreach efforts include development of a new diversity and inclusion initiative to ensure that people new to the community feel welcomed and encouraged. A $5,000 grant from the Southeastern Illinois Community Foundation and a $1,500 grant from the Koboldt Trust supports the DIVE IN initiative to develop a community app that will reach families and individuals in need of multilingual and inclusive services, as well as promote Effingham County in general. Additional tools to create connections to local resources are also in development by the D & I Task Force.

Work with the Effingham Regional Career Academy continued to move the project forward with intergovernmental agreements reached with 14 area school districts and funding secured to begin construction of a new facility in Effingham as early as late 2021. The ERCA will link students to local employers by training them in the high demand careers available in the region.

The ERCA is one of many efforts by the Chamber to link employers with needed workers.

To learn more about the Chamber, visit our website at www.effinghamcountychamber.com or social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Local Link is a weekly e-publication benefitting Effingham County and its surrounding communities by connecting local business with consumers to provide information on local events, business updates, hot deals & specials and current job openings. This is a FREE resource delivered locally to individuals, members and non-members!

The Chamber uses this FREE tool to share helpful links and other resources for easy access by the public. Local Link gives area businesses the opportunity to advertise their business with display ads and Business Spotlights reaching 1,700 inboxes weekly.

For more information or to sign-up, contact Nicole Morrison at nmorrison@effinghamcountychamber.com.

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After 40+ years, President & CEO Norma Lansing will be retiring at the end of April!
W.E.T. Pools & Spas

Company Celebrates 25 Years as Pool & Spa Experts

Water Equipment Technologies, Inc., better known as W.E.T. Pools & Spas, has been serving the community since 1996. W.E.T. started as a pressure washer sales and service business and in 1999 became a full-service pool dealer. This year they will celebrate their 25th Year Anniversary with special events throughout the year.

Owner Doug Thoele sold the pressure washing side of the business three years ago, and their focus is now solely on pools and spas.

“Pools and spas are our specialty,” said Tammy Quast, who has been with the company since 1998. “We have sold pools as far away as Osage Beach, Missouri and Nashville, Tennessee,” she continued. Their most popular style is the rectangular 16x40. The company sells, installs and services pools and spas.

W.E.T. is a retailer for BioGuard chemicals for maintaining a beautiful pool. Their customers can take advantage of W.E.T.’s expertise to keep their investment looking its best.

“Each spring we host a ‘Pool School’ for our customers,” explained Quast. “Our local BioGuard representative comes in and teaches a class about the use of their products. He’ll explain water testing and treatment. Customers appreciate the opportunity to ask questions and get advice before summer starts. They’ll learn everything they need to know to enjoy their pool all summer long.”

W.E.T. will be bringing in new products this spring to create the ultimate pool and spa experience. Their staff recently returned from a trade show to research new products. “We have the latest pool and spa products in our showroom. There is something fun for everyone.”

“We will be scheduling our spring open house soon, so the public can view all we have to offer,” said Quast. Follow W.E.T. Pools & Spas on Facebook to learn more about upcoming events and classes.
Since its beginnings in 1881, Midland States Bank has grown to reach customers throughout Illinois and the St. Louis metro area. Both Effingham and the Bank have changed quite a bit in the past 140 years, but our commitment to you, our neighbors, hasn’t. We understand that building a community bank is more than having a local branch with four walls and a roof.

It’s about offering not only what customers need, but also what they want. We continue to provide the Effingham area a wide range of products and services for any stage of life: personal banking, business banking, and wealth management. We make sure our financial offerings help you meet the goals in your life, but in a way that is available anytime, anywhere. This is our promise to give you Banking Built Better.

Banking Built Better also means we care about the people making deposits more than how much they’re depositing. Especially in a global pandemic. To alleviate additional hardships faced in 2020, the Midland States Bank Foundation presented $250,000 of additional grants to support COVID-19 relief efforts throughout our local communities. The grant recipients worked to address urgent needs for food, shelter, rent and utility assistance, primary health care, and mental health services. Since its inception in 2011, the Foundation has awarded over $1,150,000 to non-profit organizations throughout Midland’s footprint.

We’re a community bank, who is proud to call Effingham home. If you’re looking for more built into your financial services, we’re that partner. We’re Banking Built Better.

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Do you love wizards, unicorns, fairies, dragons and anything from the fantasy realm? If so, you must check out the scorching new business in the area! Bobbaloo’s, located at 700 West Fayette Avenue in Effingham opened for business September 1, 2020 and has been providing fun and adventure to the entire area ever since.

Bobbaloo’s is an interactive retail space where you can play and/or purchase games like Dungeons & Dragons, Magic the Gathering, Yu-Gi-Oh, Pokemon, or one of the many board games available. Join Bobbaloo the Wizard in his castle to have other fun activities like birthday parties, painting sessions or even a monthly video game tournament. There is also video game systems like the Nintendo Entertainment System and Nintendo Switch to play…

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Be sure to stop in and see what all the dragon fire is about! Bobbaloo’s is open from 10:00 a.m to 8:00 p.m. daily and until 10:00 p.m on Friday and Saturday. Check out the website and/or follow on Facebook to check out the event calendar or the latest updates.

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Dieterich Bank

Two Thousand Twenty has been a year many will not forget. It has been a historical year for Dieterich Bank, as well, with many noteworthy events.

The bank adapted operations as part of the pandemic to continue to provide quality service to our customers, while maintaining the health and well-being of our staff, customers, and communities. Our customers demonstrated their adaptability through notable increases in use of online banking services, the mobile app, and telephone banking. The commercial lending team spent a significant amount of time in 2020 helping our customers understand and navigate the SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Dieterich Bank and the banking industry in general experienced significant growth in deposits due to stimulus packages offered by the government and conservative consumer spending. While the ultimate impact of the pandemic is uncertain, Dieterich Bank remains committed to remaining a strong and reputable institution.

The bank expanded its footprint in Breese, Chester, Columbia, Red Bud, and Waterloo, Illinois in 2020 with the purchase of five branches. The acquisition increased Dieterich Bank assets to just over $1 billion and brings its number of banking locations from nine to fourteen. We welcome over 11,000 new customers to the bank and 26 new employees to the Dieterich Bank team. The addition of these five branches allows the bank to expand its presence in the Metro East market and aligns with the bank’s strategic initiative and community banking culture. We welcome these new customers, employees, and communities into our Dieterich Bank family.

In October of 2020 Dieterich Bank held a groundbreaking for its new bank location on South Route 157 in Edwardsville, Illinois. The full-service branch will include an attractive 4,200 square foot facility with drive-up lanes. The new facility in Edwardsville is scheduled to be open July 2021. The team is in place to serve this market and the branch is currently operating out of a temporary facility. Dieterich Bank believes the Edwardsville market provides access to significant retail and municipal deposits along with increased consumer and residential lending opportunities. Entering this market with a physical location allows for expanded geographics and appeal to different customer segments.

Dieterich Bank received an award for being named Best Places to Work in Illinois for the second year in a row. The bank received an improved rating in all eight categories from 2019. We are pleased to receive this award. It aligns with our goal to be an employer of choice and is beneficial in retaining and attracting talent.

Dieterich Bank was chartered in 1909. It currently has fourteen branch locations and a corporate office located in Effingham, Illinois along with a Loan Production Office in South County St. Louis. The banking facilities are in Dieterich, Teutopolis, Newton, Effingham, Lake Sara, St. Elmo, Red Bud North, Belleville, Breese, Chester, Columbia, Red Bud South and Waterloo. Bank assets are just over $1 billion with over 175 employees. The bank continues to grow and strives to provide quality products and service to our customers, a pleasant work environment for our employees, and support to our communities.
The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic

The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic of Ruben Boyajian, MD and Emily Boyajian, NP, located in the newly built St. Anthony’s Health Center at 900 West Temple, Building B, Suite 2500 in Effingham, Illinois is celebrating 40 years of dedicated service to the community. The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic provides evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the breast, multidisciplinary oncology care, gastrointestinal endoscopy and laparoscopic procedures.

Ruben Boyajian, MD, owner, is an active member of the American Society of Breast Surgeons, the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the Society of Surgical Oncology. He is also the Director of the Women’s Wellness and Cancer Services at St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital. The Women’s Wellness and Cancer Services of St. Anthony’s main objective is promoting the early detection of breast cancer as well as other services such as dexam scanning, lactation services, etc. In addition to all this, Ruben received certification by the MD Anderson Cancer Center in 2018. And, Ruben has been voted as the People’s Choice Best Surgeon by Effingham Daily News readers since 2004. He was honored in 2014 with the Effingham County Citizen of the Year Award for his countless hours helping many organizations in Effingham County and beyond. His dedication to his patients and his expertise sets him apart in his field.

The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic prides itself on providing a team approach for cancer care, minimally invasive diagnostic and therapeutic procedures and encourages patient involvement in the process. Their primary concern is the care and welfare of each individual patient. The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic maintains dedication and leadership in the areas of cancer education, prevention and treatment.

Joining Ruben on his team at The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic is his wife, Emily Boyajian, NP, who received the degree of Master of Science from Indiana State University. A highly qualified team of surgical nurse specialists and administrative staff work side by side with Ruben and Emily to continue the pursuit of the ideal of service to their patients and to the community they are proud to serve.

To learn more about The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic, call them at (217)347-2255 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment or visit them online at www.rboyajianmd.com where you will find a general review of their practice, directions to their office, community concerns and advances in surgical care.

Pictured left to right: Cathy Raddatz, RN, Julie Schumacher, Janene Swingler, Emily Boyajian, NP, Ruben Boyajian, MD and Shelby Overbeck, RN.
“If you build it, they will come.”
That phrase from the movie “Field of Dreams” could be the motto for the Village of Dieterich. Since 2005, the community of just more than 600 residents has created two subdivisions. The first, North Pointe, has had three additions to accommodate the growing number of those wanting to locate there. In all, 92 lots were sold in the subdivision.
Building on that success, Hartke Subdivision was developed. Lots there were spoken for even before infrastructure was complete in 2018. Today, more than 25 lots have been sold in the 38-lot subdivision.
Dieterich Economic Development Coordinator and Village Clerk Brittny Gipson isn’t surprised.
“We had a lot of success with our North Pointe subdivision and there still was a demand for lots when North Pointe was winding down. It’s validation that what we’re doing is still the right thing, and that people still find Dieterich a desirous community to call home,” she said.
The village receives inquiries quite often for information on the new subdivision, and homebuilders have enjoyed success in both subdivisions as homes are sold even before they are finished.
“With COVID, we kind of thought things would slow down, but we haven’t really noticed it,” said Gipson.
Chris Niebrugge of Niebrugge Lumber Co. in Dieterich can attest to that.
He and his brother, Greg, were asked to build a home in North Pointe to stimulate interest in it. Since then, they have built 25 spec homes on the side in both subdivisions. Very rarely are they finished before they are sold, according to Chris.
“When they can see what it looks like from curbside is when they start to find interest in the home and usually it is sold about 30 days after that. I’ve got two calls on a home now standing and people can see it,” he said.
Custom Family Homes has seen all homes sell pretty quickly. The Effingham-based company was one of the first to construct a spec home in North Pointe and...
has built homes in both subdivisions. Now, prospective homeowners come to them to build a home.

“They say, ‘We want to build in Diet-erich,’” said owner Ron Pearce.

Pearce has experience building homes in many other towns, but he called Dieterich “the best to work with.”

“If you have a problem, they will help. If I need dirt moved, they’ll find someone to move it for me. They bend over backwards to make it a good place to build,” he said.

Brent Bohnhoff and business partner Eric Emmerich built in 2013 what they thought would be their first and only spec house in North Pointe Subdivision.

“That first house went well, so we decided to build another and that led to another,” said Bohnhoff.

As B&E Developers, the two have built or have scheduled to build 25 homes. Bohnhoff estimates their homes have added 69 residents to the village’s population and 32 children, who are either currently enrolled in the school district, or will be soon.

Bohnhoff describes the turnkey homes they build as “custom spec homes.”

“We listen to our previous customers and try to implement that feedback into our upcoming projects,” he said.

As a lifelong resident, Bohnhoff knows Dieterich is a desirable place to live for many reasons. The community’s residents are the biggest draw.

“Most of our buyers are in their late 20s or early 30s and looking for a safe, friendly place to raise a family,” he said.

The three homebuilders also agree Diet-erich is attractive because of the price of the nearly half-acre lots, which come complete with infrastructure — including high-speed broadband internet access. Gipson noted that the village isn’t making a profit off the lots, which are $4,000 in the Hartke Subdivision.

“The village has over $30,000 in each of these lots. We sell them at a significant loss in order to just get the homes built quickly, and that’s the whole goal behind this,” said Gipson. “We’re not in this to make money.

Bohnhoff said the inexpensive lot price allows for selling a new home at a desirable price range.

He said couples can buy a new home within their budget in Dieterich that would be financially out of reach in neighboring communities.

Although Bohnhoff and Emmerich try to stick to building homes in their hometown of Dieterich, they have built homes in Teu-topolis in the last couple of years.

“It’s funny. We have had multiple may-ors and other community leaders asking us to build in their town. Every town is looking for growth,” he said.

Another reason people are attracted to Dieterich is location. The village is centrally located between larger towns, where many people work, eat and shop.

The village is a 10-minute drive from Effingham and Newton, and 30 minutes from Mattoon/Charleston and Olney. The village is just seven minutes to Inter-state-70.

Gipson said the subdivisions have a demographic mix of new homeowners. Some work in another town, others are retired, and others work from home. The latter has increased since the pandemic and new fiber optic internet in the village has made it possible. Gipson calls the “fiber-to-home” initiative through Montrose Mutual Telephone Company “a game changer.”

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You want to be able to just build a community. The other reason it’s successful is the value that you can get here for a home. I hear quite often you can’t find a brand new home in Effingham for what you can here in Dieterich.”
“Now more than ever fiber is a big deal and it’s necessary with so many people working and doing remote learning from home,” said Gipson. “I know that’s some of the reasons people who work from home have moved here.”

While Abby Grewell and her husband, Jarrett, didn’t move to Dieterich’s Hartke Subdivision because of the super fast internet speed, she found it beneficial when she suddenly had to perform her job with Patterson Technology Center in Effingham from home.

“It definitely helped,” she said.

School district

Perhaps the biggest draw for young couples is the Dieterich Unit 30 School District.

“I probably got a third of my homes sold to older people coming into town either from rural areas or different communities, and two-thirds are young couples,” said homebuilder Chris Niebrugge.

He attributes the larger allure of young couples to the school system, as does Gipson.

“Our Unit 30 schools are a big draw for a lot of the homes. If we didn’t have a good school district, we would not be successful. I’m sure of it,” said Gipson.

Unit 30 Superintendent Cary Jackson believes couples are drawn to the school system because they provide a high-quality education in a family-oriented environment.

It’s ranked No. 49 out of 859 school districts in Illinois, according to Niche rankings — among the top 6% in the state. Niche analyzes data and reviews to produce rankings, report cards and profiles of K-12 schools.

Another draw is affordable property tax rates.

“We are able to provide a high-quality education and still have one of the lowest property tax rates in the region. In fact, the Effingham regional area has some of the lowest property tax rates in the state,” said Jackson.

The small size of the district also is an incentive.

“Many people enjoy the ‘small school’ atmosphere, where a lot of individualized attention can be given to our students,” said Jackson.

The influx of young families has helped drive enrollment in the district to the point where officials are looking at expansion. The main growth, of course, is in the elementary, where Jackson said administrators are keeping a close eye on enrollment numbers.

Traditionally, he said, elementary classes have had two sections. Last school year the largest class of 61 students was split into three sections. Those students are now in fifth grade. The next largest class has 51 students, while the smallest is the seniors, at 29.

If enrollment trends continue, Jackson said the need for additional classroom space would become a priority, starting in the elementary and continuing into the upper-grade levels. For now, the district has completed a facility assessment to gather estimates and options for expansion.

The district enrollment picture was much different more than a decade ago, when low enrollment figures prompted the first subdivision.

Total enrollment at the district had peaked to 597 during the 1996-97 school year, but then began to slide the following year. The slide would continue as enrollment dropped to its lowest point — 426 — during 2009-10 school year.

“Several years ago the talk of school consolidation struck a nerve and motivated the community to find ways to strengthen the school and increase enrollment,” said Jackson. “Everyone is in agreement that the school is a high priority in the community.”

About five years after the village broke ground on North Pointe Subdivision, enrollment began to rebound and has increased nearly every year since. It now stands at 557.

“Most schools in Southern Illinois are losing population and we feel proud to be a part of Dieterich’s growing school population,” said Bohnhoff, whose wife is a school board member. Their children attend Dieterich schools.

Guidance

Other villages have taken note.

Arcola School District has experienced a gradual decline in its enrollment in the last five years. The Arcola Community
& Economic Development group completed a community-wide needs assessment survey and one of the needs identified was residential options and growth.

“So the study of Dieterich was part of our planning in that area,” said Superintendent Tom Mulligan. “From a school district standpoint, I am very interested in increased enrollment.”

The Teutopolis School District was also seeing its enrollment decline.

“For many years there was no lots available to build new homes on. Our school enrollment was dropping and the village was landlocked by farmland. An opportunity to purchase 40 acres became available,” said Teutopolis Mayor Greg Hess.

Village officials turned to neighboring Dieterich for advice.

“Whenever you want to do a project, you go to the experts for advice. They already had a very successful subdivision for several years. They were very helpful by giving us a copy of their subdivision rules and regulations to guide us through creating our own,” said Hess. “They also were kind enough to help us with the do’s and don’ts of creating and maintaining a successful subdivision. Dieterich was very instrumental in sharing their knowledge and the Village of Teutopolis is grateful to them.”

Teutopolis established Prairie View Subdivision in 2017 and has sold most of the lots in Phase I.

“We were pleasantly surprised by the rate of growth, so much so, that we started Phase 2 ahead of schedule,” said Hess. The village has sold 12 of the 29 lots in Phase 2. Each lot measures approximately a half acre and sells for $12,500.

Hess said the village has benefited through the creation of a Tax Increment Finance District that includes the subdivision. That allows the real estate tax to pay for the cost of infrastructure. The village has invested $2.5 million in the subdivision, which it hopes to recoup before the TIF district expires.

The village also hopes to emulate Dieterich’s school enrollment boost with the homes being built mainly for families.

Hess said there are a number of reasons people want to build a home in Teutopolis.

“Teutopolis is a safe village,” he said. “It’s clean, with friendly people, and we have excellent schools.”

Homeowners

Abby Grewell and her husband wanted a good school for their son. So, they chose Dieterich and moved into Hartke subdivision a little over a year ago.

“We knew we wanted a smaller school district for our kids,” said Grewell, adding that they expanded their family. They still have jobs there, but they wanted a smaller town life for their son, who is now over a year old.

“It’s a growing community but smaller than Effingham and that’s what we wanted for this phase of life,” said Grewell.

The Grewells were looking for a small, close-knit community to raise their kids as they expand their family.

“Very ‘Mayberry’ is what it feels like,” Abby said, referring to the fictional setting of “The Andy Griffith Show.” “Everybody is very friendly and very nice. It’s a good, clean community.”

Abby Grewell credits the villagers with making the transition easier.

“They’ve been very welcoming to us moving into the community not being from there, not having a lot of family there. That has been nice. Everybody that we’ve dealt with at the village has been more than helpful,” she said. “Anything we needed or any questions that we had they’ve been quick to answer.”

Vickie Barkley also found the people in Dieterich “very friendly, very neighborly and very accommodating” when she moved to Hartke Subdivision in July.

Barkley was familiar with Dieterich, having grown up in neighboring Island Grove.

“For years, my family came to Dieterich to see family and for the Fourth of July celebrations,” she said.

Barkley, who has spent most of her adult life in Newton, was looking for a central location between her children and their families and work.

“I chose Dieterich because I have a daughter in Newton and a grandson in Newton. And I have a daughter and her husband and grandchildren here in Diet- erich and I work in Effingham. So this is an ideal location for me. In the middle of everything that I need.”

Barkley has enjoyed living in the village.

“I know when I used to see ‘friendly town’ on the Dieterich sign I thought ‘that’s a neat little saying.’ But it’s true.”

Barkley also likes the slower pace.

“You can walk anywhere and feel safe. All the things of a cozy little town is what Dieterich represents.”

Housing boom

Dieterich may be enticing to those who want to build a home, but the numbers reflect national trends.

Many Americans who have kept their jobs during the pandemic have capitalized...
Delbert Mundt and wife Jeri were passionate about Dieterich and devoted much of their time to the community. Their efforts helped grow the community. That legacy continues today with their children and Dieterich’s newest residential development, The Preserve.

It takes a village

The Dieterich subdivisions were the result of forethought and planning by community leaders who came together years ago for the sole purpose of improving the community. Dieterich has partnered with the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs to complete MAPPING sessions that are meant to generate ideas for community improvement.

“Several really good projects have been the result of those sessions,” said Jackson, the school superintendent. “In the past, affordable housing was one of the goals. This is where North Pointe and Hartke subdivisions originated. And most recently, the Dieterich Community Center project. Pretty much any new additions to Dieterich has come from those sessions.”

The three main groups in Dieterich — Dieterich Community Development Corporation (DCDC), village board and school board — work extremely well together, according to Jackson.

“People want to be a part of a community. I feel that Dieterich makes people feel accepted. There is a sense of confidence in our community when we all work together.”

The Preserve

A founding member of DCDC, Delbert Mundt, was passionate about building the community and enriching it. DCDC started as a small committee of residents who decided to look for ways to invest in Dieterich and make the community grow.

“They just really worked hard. It became a community effort,” said Delbert’s daughter, Jae Mundt.

Jae and her siblings are continuing that effort with the development of The Preserve. Located on 60 acres of what used to be the Mundt family farm, the 21 residential lots are located within a nature preserve.

The family farm was bought by Delbert’s grandfather in 1897. As it gradually transitioned into a conservation reserve, he and wife Jeri envisioned the property being divided into large country lots. As Dieterich continued to grow and the need for more housing became a topic of conversation, they decided to move forward with a subdivision.

Delbert and Jeri, unfortunately, would not live to see their vision come to fruition. Delbert died last year; Jeri in 2019.

Seeing it all come together is bittersweet for Jae, who grew to love the property. She recalls the family piling into the car or pickup truck and driving down the trails at least once a year, sometimes twice.

“We would drive through there and just look at the land, look at how the land was changing, talk about the memories where the pond used to be, where the cattle used to be. There’s wildlife there. On one hand, we love driving through there, but on the other hand we’re excited that people will be able to enjoy that property,” she said.

Her brother, Kevin Mundt, believes The Preserve is unique for a residential development in Effingham County with its different grasses and brush intermixed with pine trees planted by their father and a family friend.

“It’s truly a nature preserve. There’s deer walking around. It’s really great. There’s so
many different types of birds out there. Just to be out in nature like that is a very unique experience,” he said.

Much like Dieterich’s subdivisions, The Preserve had already generated considerable interest before the family broke ground on it last month. The Preserve is located just beyond the south edge of Dieterich. Each country lot conforms to the slope and natural flow of the land, giving lot owners a rare opportunity to create their own vision of their land.

Each lot has access to EJ Water, fiber optic and Norris Electric and is located within the Dieterich school and park systems. Restricted covenants are deeded, with each lot protecting the lifestyle and investment of the homeowner.

The Mundt family hopes new homeowners will embrace its unique, mature wildland as they develop their homestead — and embrace Dieterich itself.

“The more people you bring into a community, the more demand there is for goods and services and businesses,” said Gipson, the village’s economic development coordinator. “We try to offer things the community needs and wants. Businesses in this area, they know, they see our growth and it makes it more appealing to start a business or expand.”

The village has welcomed new businesses in recent years and fostered expansions of existing ones — so much so that a second industrial park had to be created.

It has also brought a demand for a new multi-recreational center and day care. The village is raising money and applying for grants to pay for a new recreation center that is slated to house a licensed day care center.

Officials have also worked to make Dieterich aesthetically pleasing and accommodating for residents.

Gipson noted the village has done a lot of beautification efforts over the last 20 years, with parks and streetscapes. Officials have also focused on making a lot of the sidewalks through the village compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“That really speaks to people when they’re looking for a place to settle,” she said.

The residents have also worked to make the village a charming place to live.

“You can tell just by driving through that people take pride in their community. A lot of people want to settle someplace where they would be proud to call home,” said Gipson.

As Dieterich grows, Gipson is not ruling out more residential development, just not in the immediate future.

“We’d like to. We’ve had conversations,” said Gipson. “We have so much going on right now, though, with our park project, with our new industrial park going on, our streetscape project getting ready to start in spring, we have a ton of projects and money planned. We want to. It’s just going to be a matter of the balance of timing with the funding available.”

Village officials also don’t want the residential side to outgrow the business and commercial/industrial side.

“We’re trying to have a good balance. We don’t want to be just a bedroom community. We want to be able to offer more for those residents,” said Gipson.

**Future**

The residential boom has had an auxiliary benefit to the Village of Dieterich.

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Insurance Past, Present and Future.

Born of necessity in 1882, Bishop Mutual formed by a group of citizens from Bishop Township as a way to pool risk and share in losses. This “mutual” concept was and still is an excellent example of the cooperative spirit that addresses challenges in rural areas and small towns.

Bishop Mutual offers coverage for farm, home, rental properties and renters. The company specializes in farms and rural homes and also offers competitive coverage for town properties. Policyholders are members of the mutual and vote to elect board members from among the membership. Every policyholder, therefore, has a voice in the values and mission of the company.

Seven area agencies represent Bishop Mutual including Cutts Insurance Agency in Greenup, Slifer Agency in Dieterich, Farley Agency in Newton, Holste Agency in Altamont, Snedeker & Associates in Casey, St Peter Agency in St Peter, and Wohltman-Aherin Agency in Dieterich.

Much the same way that mutuals are folks working together, Wohltman-Aherin Agency prides itself on working together with their clients to provide the best protection possible for each dollar, making sure every client has the coverage they need, and providing excellent, honest service. The agents at Wohltman-Aherin Agency can provide coverage for everything from home, auto, business, farm, and crops to life insurance and financial products.

The Wohltman-Aherin Agency team has 122 years of experience in the insurance industry. Myron and Norma Wohltman started the agency in the early 70’s to serve the Dieterich area. Norma is still one of the smiling faces you see in the office today, along with her daughter, Diane Aherin, Mandi Utley, and Mark Behrns, who serve clients from across Illinois. The agency is excited to add a third generation with Devin Aherin joining the staff.
Have you always dreamed of building a new home but felt so overwhelmed that you didn’t know where to start? Whether you are looking to build your first home, expanding to meet the needs of your growing family or downsizing, Fieldcrest Homes knows that building a home is a major life decision and that your home should be an expression of you and how you live. Let Fieldcrest Homes guide you through the journey towards your new home!!

Fieldcrest Homes was established on the foundation of a passionate pursuit for building quality homes. With over 30 years of experience in the construction industry, founders Bryan Wenthe and Jason Wrone, both with deep roots in the Effingham community, have developed a comprehensive approach that takes the stress out of the building process. From taking the time to gain an in-depth understanding of the specific needs for each client to implementing the latest in design, construction materials and techniques, Fieldcrest Homes combines creativity and functionality to bring your vision to reality. As a full-service general contractor, Fieldcrest Homes takes care of every phase of construction. They can build on your lot or help find your dream location. Each home is built with an attention to detail and craftsmanship as though they were building it for themselves. When you walk into your home for the first time and as you create memories for years to come, you can feel the Fieldcrest Homes Difference.

To get started on your new home, call Fieldcrest Homes today at 217.240.0857 to set up a free design consultation. Visit us online at www.fieldcresthomes.com and follow us on Facebook @ fieldcresthomes.


Bryan Wenthe, President & CEO

Jason Wrone, CFO

Fieldcrest Homes

DREAM • DESIGN • BUILD • LIVE

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Become part of our family
Security — If you have not fully embraced the importance of security in your home and business computer networks, you need to NOW. Cyber Security attacks are on the rise exponentially. If you can imagine, your networks are being attacked many times more than all those pesky “robo” phone calls you are getting. Hopefully your network is hanging up on those attacks like we do the robo callers, but the network attacks are coming in many different forms than simply knocking on our network door or calling us. They are trying to slip in with emails in many different ways. They are providing what looks like very legitimate emails, asking us to click on something which looks fine but will cause bad things to happen. They are hiding in the web sites we visit. They are slipping into files and even pictures we might want to pull into our systems.

Here is a quick checklist.
1. Make sure you are getting good daily backups of anything important you do not want to lose, like pictures and legal documents. Imagine losing everything on your system. Systems do fail and some attacks will encrypt all your files then lock you out of your system unless you pay them a ransom.
2. Keep your anti-virus software current. Depending on your needs, there are many different types of products out there.
3. Change your passwords occasionally. We all have many different passwords and standardizing might help us, but it allows the attackers to eventually find it. Consider for your most secure needs, such as banking, to have a separate password that is more unique and change it even more often.
4. Most internet routers will provide a firewall, but only if the firewall feature is turned on. Be sure the router password is not some type of default password.
5. Be very wary of anyone claiming to be a support person who wants to get on your system. The only person who should ever be allowed to remotely connect to your system is someone you have contacted and requested them to help you.

You have so much to worry about in a day. Network security doesn’t have to be one of them.

BE PROACTIVE...NOT REACTIVE!
Security, Monitoring, Management - all in ONE place.
Car Corral

Headquarters for all things powersports

Just a short drive from Effingham, Car Corral, located on Highway 50 in Flora, is your official headquarters for all things powersports. Car Corral owners Carl and Ronald Slobodzian bring years of experience to the dealership, offering used cars, new and pre-owned powersports, utility trailers, the latest in parts and accessories, and unparalleled service.

This year is a unique year for Car Corral, as 2021 makes 33 years as a local used car business, and 23 years as your local Polaris dealer. Car Corral offers the area’s largest selection of powersports. Car Corral features powersports by Polaris, Can-Am, CFMoto, SSR and Slingshot, plus a wide variety of pre-owned cars, motorcycles, golf carts, ATV’s and side-by-sides. They carry a full line of on and off-road motorcycles, with dirt bikes ranging in size from 50cc to 450cc’s. New for 2021 from SSR is a 4x4 400cc side by side vehicle that has a dump bed and fuel injection.

We also offer a wide selection of single and double axle utility trailers. We also added the SSR line of products of powersports products. Car Corral is focused on providing an enjoyable and beneficial experience. Whether it is help searching for OEM parts, needing assistance with finance services or looking for an experienced powersports service department, the staff at Car Corral is ready.

How does Car Corral stay small and sell big? It’s simple: years of experience. Carl has managed Car Corral for 23 years and is an expert in all facets of Polaris and Can-Am powersports sales, service, and overall management.

Ronald offers more than 50 years of experience and knowledge in the auto industry and will work with you to find the exact car or truck that you need.

Car Corral is family owned and operated and can provide you with the latest and best in powersports products to make your outdoor living more enjoyable. From the most recent ATV technology to the hottest new side by side, they can help you find the recreational vehicle made for you. Combine this wide array of selections with their friendly and knowledgeable staff, and Car Corral will become your only stop for all of your powersports needs. Stop by Car Corral, check out their website at www.carcoralpolaris.com or follow them on Facebook at Car Corral Polaris Can-Am.
This 5th Generation Family Business Celebrates Memories Made in 2020

It’s estimated that less than three percent of family businesses make it to the fifth generation. However, Wright’s Furniture & Flooring has survived a lot in its 132-year-history, and 2020 has been no exception! The silver lining is that an unprecedented year also made for some pretty outstanding memories.

“We feel so grateful for the way the community has stepped up to support local businesses, including Wright’s Furniture, this year, said Wright’s Furniture & Flooring President John Wright. “Being a family business is different than a corporation. We live here and we’re part of the community and we care about building relationships with our customers. 2020 really showed us all how important those relationships truly are.”

Many of our employees found opportunities in the challenges. Some, like Ronda Cochran, took family road trips. Dee Johnson and Brian Hardiek celebrated the births of new grandchildren. Sandy Carter even began 2021 with a new great grandchild. Linda Heuerman took the chance to run the Great American Relay. Tom Wright and his two sons were able to play a few rounds of golf together. But most of all, we enjoyed the strength of our community.

In light of several cancelled vacations, Karen Brumleve, said her 2020 highlight was right here at home. “This year, I’ve had so many former customers come in who I haven’t seen in years and it’s been wonderful having the chance to reconnect with them,” she said. “It made me realize how lucky I am to have met so many customers who have become good friends.”

Wright’s Furniture & Flooring is a locally-owned business which features a large selection of quality living room, bedroom, dining room, home office, entertainment and custom furniture as well as a wide selection of flooring. The business also offers interior design services and window treatments through its Wright at Home store located in Effingham.

For more information about Wright’s Furniture & Flooring, visit www.WrightsFurniture.com or call 217.925.5228.
Sarah Bush Lincoln President and Chief Executive Officer Jerry Esker and Dr. Peter Bonutti are looking forward to the 2022 opening of a new Sarah Bush Lincoln Bonutti Clinic in Effingham.

The $35 million facility is under construction behind the existing clinic on West Evergreen Avenue. It will feature state-of-the-art equipment.

“All surgeries are performed at either Sarah Bush Lincoln or the Surgery Center here in Effingham,” Bonutti said. “The Effingham clinic manages patient care outside of surgery. Just about anything other than surgery can be done in this new facility.

“Hopefully, you don’t need surgery,” he added. “If you do need surgery, we think robotics and some of the newest minimally invasive techniques are important. That’s why we are sub-specialized within our orthopedic group.”

Bonutti said the new clinic will offer high-tech preoperative imaging, so robots can identify parts of a patient’s body.

“The robots need information before surgery, using a CAT scan or MRI. We need those diagnostics available here,” Bonutti said. “Patients will be able to get them right here in house, and be able to set up robotic surgery within a week.”

Bonutti said a CAT scan or MRI examines the hip, knee and ankle in detail to chart deformities. He said they use a special software package added to the original CAT scan system software that uses a fiber optic link to transfer patient imaging data to the Stryker robotic systems. That information then goes to the actual robot used for surgery.

“We need the imaging to do that. That is why the CT and MRI are so important to this clinic,” Bonutti said.

He said in addition to new CAT and MRI imaging, the new clinic will have access to motion X-rays, ultrasound and digital X-rays.

“We will have a full diagnostic suite here,” Bonutti said.

“The one thing you must realize is some patients are driving 200 miles to see us,” Bonutti said. “We get patients that may drive two or three hours or more to visit the clinic.”

Bonutti wants patients to come to the Bonutti Clinic to get their diagnosis and imaging on the same day, then return home with a detailed assessment of their condition.

“I can’t have them driving back and forth several times from hundreds of miles away,” Bonutti said. “I have patients that come here from 41 states and six countries.”

A rendering of what the new Sarah Bush Lincoln Bonutti Clinic will look like when it is finished in 2022. Local architects Utz and Associates of Effingham designed the new facility.
We have the largest orthopedic group in downstate Illinois.”

He said the larger clinic will allow patients to get all medical and rehabilitation services they need in one place — rather than getting an MRI at one facility, traveling for a CAT scan at a different facility, and rehab somewhere else. Bonutti said in order to accomplish this, the staff at the new clinic needs to be specialized in several different areas.

“If you need a medical doctor, we will have medical doctors in house,” he said. “If someone needs a workman’s comp doctor, they will be here. If a patient needs pain management, they will be in house. A physical therapist is in house. We’ll have occupational medicine. And if you need a surgeon, he will be in house.

“We want to set this up so a patient can do everything at one time,” Bonutti said. “This is really for the patient’s best interest.”

When a patient leaves the new clinic, he or she will know their treatment plan. He said the new clinic’s main goal is making the process easier for patients.

“We want to find patients the best path, whether it be biological treatments, surgical treatments, injectable treatments or rehab therapy,” Bonutti said.

“Everyone has their own niche. No one can be the best at all procedures. That is why we are so specialized. We have 14 orthopedic surgeons,” Bonutti said. “We are excited about growing specialty care for our patients.”

Bonutti said the new facility will house surgical and nonsurgical practitioners under one roof.

Photo by Charles Mills

Dr. Peter Bonutti, left, and Sarah Bush Lincoln President and Chief Executive Officer Jerry Esker, right, in the lobby of Sarah Bush Lincoln Bonutti Clinic of Effingham. Construction of a new two-story SBL Bonutti Clinic is expected to be finished in 2022.

The future interior lobby of Sarah Bush Lincoln Bonutti Clinic as designed by local architects Utz and Associates of Effingham. Construction of the building will be finished in 2022.

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Do You Suffer From:
- Numbness/Burning pain
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- Pain when you walk
- Difficult sleeping due to leg & foot discomfort
- Prickling or tingling in the hands and feet

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(217) 500-3027
Target: 2022

Esker, the SBL president and chief executive officer, looks forward to opening the new facility.

“We are on track to open the new facility next summer. Right now we are ahead of schedule,” Esker said.

Esker estimates there will be between 125 and 150 employees working at the new clinic when it becomes fully operational in 2022. He said the new and improved Bonutti clinic will be two stories tall, with 65,000 square feet of space.

When the state considered and approved the clinic’s certificate of need, the construction cost was estimated at $35 million.

“I think we are going to come in somewhat less than that,” Esker said. “We’ll be under budget for sure. I think it will end up around $30 million.”

Esker said Effingham has been very supportive of the project.

“We were really pleased with the response we’ve received in Effingham and we are excited to be a part of the community,” Esker said.

Esker is also pleased with the partnership between Sarah Bush Lincoln and Bonutti.

“We are proud to have a partnership with him,” Esker said. “He brings some high-quality things to Sarah Bush Lincoln.”

And he’s proud of the new clinic.

“It’s a beautiful building we are proud to be bringing to the people of Effingham,” he said. “It’s a sign of our commitment to invest in and take care of the community.”

SBL BONUTTI CLINIC TESTING NEW TECHNOLOGY

By Charles Mills

The Sarah Bush Lincoln Bonutti Clinic is partnering with Ceras Health to offer a unique way to monitor patient health.

“Ceras is a remote wearable medical platform for medical and surgical monitoring so we can watch a patient during and after any procedures,” Dr. Peter Bonutti said. “It can tell us whether or not a patient is safely moving forward.”

Bonutti said the local clinic is one of the first medical facilities in the country chosen as a beta test site for the technology. The program started the last week of January. A wrist watch worn by the patient collects vital medical information that goes to a centrally located monitoring team.

“They have a staff of people monitoring 24/7 to make sure they get in touch with a patient if something unusual is going on,” Bonutti said.

Since most of his patients live a couple hours away from Effingham, he feels the new system is beneficial to clinic patients.

“If you have a procedure and you’re going home, this is monitoring you remotely 24/7 when you’re wearing this watch,” Bonutti said. “Even though a patient may only have a knee replacement, we are also worried about their general health.”

First, the clinic collects medical information provided by the patient and enters it in a computer database that is available to the monitoring team. The information includes things such as emergency contacts, physician contacts and the closest hospital from where that patient lives.

The patient is required to download a Ceras Health application for their mobile phone. When the patient wears the Ceras watch, vital information is transmitted from the watch to the mobile phone via Bluetooth technology. The phone app collects the information and sends it to the monitoring team. Some of the features of the Ceras Health watch include taking body temperature, measuring heart rate and measuring blood oxygen levels.

“These wearables give you instant feedback. If anything unusual happens, it will give you notifications through the system,” Bonutti said. “This gives a patient the security and safety they need when they live 200 miles away from the clinic.”

He said a majority of his patients live within a 200-mile radius of Effingham. The 24/7 monitoring center will automatically tell a patient if their heart rate is too high, send them to a local physician or immediately tell someone to go to the emergency room.

“It will guide the patients where they need to go,” Bonutti said. “We think this is critical for quality patient care.”

Bonutti is proud to help test the technology.

“We want to get the best and fastest recovery for patients. So, we’re like minded here to optimize the quality of patient care and return them to their activities as quickly and safely as possible,” Bonutti said.

“We think we need to remain on the cutting edge by getting the patients what they need,” Bonutti said.

He said the monitoring system will first be used at the Bonutti Clinic before it is used at Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital in Mattoon.

Sarah Bush Lincoln President and Chief Executive Officer Jerry Esker is impressed with the new partnership with Ceras Health.

“I think the system offers many benefits to the physician and the patient,” Esker said. “We think it has widespread usage beyond orthopedics. We’re excited to be at the forefront of something like this.”

“It is another example of Dr. Bonutti being way out ahead of the curve, as he has been throughout his whole career,” he added. “Dr. Bonutti is always two steps ahead of everybody else.”
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Matthew R Hortenstine
Tracy A Willenborg
Aaron K Leonard
Kara J Wade

Lou J Viverito
Christopher A Koester
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Montrose Mutual Telephone Company

Montrose Mutual Telephone Company (MMTC), which began on August 1, 1908, offers broadband Internet, streaming video services, and high-quality phone systems to local customers in Cumberland, Effingham, and Jasper County.

In November 2018, Wabash Communications purchased Montrose Mutual Telephone Company with plans to offer every customer improved voice, new video, and Internet speeds up to 1 GIG via Fiber to the Home. Since the purchase, we have replaced all of the dial tone equipment in Gila, Montrose, and Elliottstown exchanges. We also upgraded all the emergency standby power battery systems in all four exchanges.

What is Fiber to the Home (FTTH)?

FTTH is the broadband delivery model that extends fiber-optic cables all the way to your home or business. It is sometimes referred to as Fiber to the Premise (FTTP). By having a fiber connection to your home, you will have access to virtually unlimited bandwidth capacity and internet speeds, enabling you to enjoy a better experience with data-intensive applications such as streaming, online gaming, cloud storage, online educations, and much more.

By having a fiber connection to your home or business, you will have virtually unlimited internet access. We offer speeds up to 1 GIG for residential customers and speeds up to 10 Gbps for business customers. To put that in context, an internet speed of 1 Gbps is equal to 1,000 Mbps.

So, if you currently have an internet plan with 20 Mbps speed — about average for a U.S. household — 1 Gbps would be 50 times faster.

Construction has begun on the FTTH project! Currently, some businesses and homes can be connected to our fiber-optic network. We have crews working in the rural parts of the MMTC exchanges to help bring Fiber to the Home to our current customers.

Montrose Mutual Telephone Company — Powered by Wabash Communications, is Your Local Communications Provider!
Lake Sara Marina

Lake Sara Marina is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. With nine boat lines and five motor lines, they are the place to go for fishing, skiing and pleasure boats. They also carry the accessories for those activities, including skis, wake boards, tubes, boat covers, life vests, electronics and other equipment.

Their boat sales and service facility prides itself on an experienced staff. Mechanics have certifications from five motor manufacturers. They have six mechanics with over 175 years of combined experience, giving them a considerable advantage over the small repair shops. General Manager Howard Janis has worked in the industry for over 40 years.

Lake Sara Marina is pleased to announce they will be hosting the 2021 Boat Show Spectacular. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, they will have to adopt a number of changes: Facial Masks will now be required at the show. Plus Social Distancing must be followed. The number of people in a single boat will have to be limited.

Qwest Pontoons will be the featured NEW boat line at the 2021 Boat Show. Qwest boats will join Crest, Manitou, Crownline, Malibu, Ranger, Excel and Alumacraft. These eight boat lines will be powered by one of the following motor types: Mercruiser, Malibu, Mercury, Yamaha, Suzuki, Honda or Mud Buddy. This wide variety of products makes Lake Sara Marina the largest dealer in Southern Illinois.

Representatives from the above manufacturers will be available at the show to answer any of the patrons’ questions. Lake Sara Forever and Lake Sara Marina have enjoyed a partnership that has been very successful. Due to the patronage of Lake Sara area residents, Lake Sara Marina was able to contribute $3,400 to the Forever Project. The Marina has pledged to continue this partnership through 2024.

Lake Sara Marina cordially invites boating enthusiasts to enjoy the 2021 Lake Sara Marina Boat Show Spectacular March 4 through March 7 at the Village Square Mall in Effingham.

Make Memories – Go Boating!
J&J Gaming leads the way through 2021.

MOVING FORWARD IN 2021
J&J Gaming is taking on 2021 with a new light and continued dedication to provide the best service to help our establishments succeed. We have grown from the effects of COVID-19 and have developed and implemented new protocols to move forward and offer our establishments the best guidance in what seems to be the ‘new normal’.

Plexiglass dividers were added, safety protocols are in place and our Play it Safe™ campaign is in full swing. We have worked hard to make sure each and every one of our establishments are fully compliant and able to Play it Safe™ while video gaming. We are leading the way through 2021 as the state’s top terminal operator.

AWESOME HAND GAMING
We moved into 2021 on a positive note! In December 2020, we announced the acquisition of the assets of Awesome Hand Services, LLC and A.H. Entertainers, a division of A.H. Management Group Inc. In the transaction, we purchased all gaming and amusement operations of Awesome Hand Gaming and A.H. Entertainers.

We eagerly welcomed employees and customers of Awesome Hand Gaming to the J&J family and we are excited for our continued growth and partnership in 2021!

PLAYER PAYBACK™
Player PAYBACK™ is J&J’s exclusive rewards program. This program creates loyalty to establishments by allowing patrons to earn points through check-ins. Points can then be redeemed for both establishment prizes and great J&J gear. We’re excited to see this program evolve throughout 2021 by implementing more promotions and sweepstakes within the program, always bringing patrons back for more!

For more details on J&J Gaming and to stay up to date with us throughout 2021, follow us on our social media pages, website and our J&J Gaming app!
Johnson Funeral Home

Johnson’s was established in 1870 by Arthur Berriman Johnson and has been family owned and operated for six generations. Our mission remains to support each and every family with personalized care when their need is greatest.

Supporting our local community is also an important part of our mission. In honor of our 150th anniversary, each month throughout 2020 we provided charitable contributions of $150.00 to local services in Effingham County that are essential to the people we serve, especially in the trying times our community endured.

Our staff:
• Donald Johnson – Owner/Funeral Director and Embalmer, Retired
• Anna Johnson – Owner/Business Manager
• Patrick Johnson – Funeral Director and Embalmer
• Maddie Johnson – Pre-Planning and Care Coordinator
• Ken Stuckey – Funeral Attendant
• Dave Storm – Funeral Attendant.

We are proud to serve the Effingham area and offer our sincere gratitude for all of the support we have received throughout our years. We celebrate our milestone by looking forward to continuing our legacy in the years to come.

website: johnsonandsonsfh.com  Call: 217.342.2215
2020 was a challenging year for everyone and HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital was no exception.

The 145-year-old hospital has seen its share of devastating health events before, including the Spanish flu pandemic a century ago, and it has always responded by adapting and improving practices.

Hospital administrators and staff continued that tradition when faced with the coronavirus pandemic. While there were challenges, there also were many opportunities for the hospital to improve its practices and expand on some that were already in place.

The pandemic also helped to strengthen relationships the hospital had with the community and other health care systems.

The result? Innovative care for patients that the hospital plans to continue into 2021.

Even before the pandemic, the hospital always worked to improve its practices on a day-to-day basis. That commitment earned the hospital the 2019 Silver Award for Excellence from the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC). The award demonstrates the hospital’s ability to provide exceptional care, quality, safety and experience to patients.

Pandemic

The hospital drew on that to help solve problems that arose during the pandemic. Using the framework of continuous innovation, the hospital emerged from challenging situations better and stronger than ever before, according to HSHS St. Anthony’s Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Ryan Jennings.

“If you think about how we started with almost the inability to even have adequate testing supplies and adequately meet the needs of the community around their desire for testing, to the next phase, where we had adequate testing but really had no realistic ways of treating patients globally, not just in Effingham but globally, to finding emerging technology and then being able to partner within our health system in ways that allowed us to be able to maintain the supply chain around those testing supplies and the medications that are used to treat it and the protective equipment,” he said. “This entire thing has just been a whirlwind of incredible innovation and incredible collaboration across health care, across our health system, across multiple health systems and across the public health sector to accomplish something that is unimaginable.”

The hospital continually elevates the way it maintains a safe environment and awareness of the potential for transmissible illnesses.

Even though the hospital has dealt with other respiratory-borne illnesses, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), COVID resulted in an acute awareness that even a slightest variation in processes can cause unintended consequences.

One of those processes was the way the hospital monitors hand-washing. The
hospital started using SwipeSense Hand Hygiene Monitoring System two years ago, but the COVID pandemic reinforced the critical nature of being able to quantify how effectively hand-washing is done and to demonstrate to staff how well they’re doing. The system electronically tracks hand hygiene upon entry and exit of each patient room by scanning the caregiver’s badge when hand hygiene is performed. “That’s something very few hospitals have. That type of technology raises the bar again on how we deliver care,” said Jennings.

Innovations

Another innovation introduced new modes of communication. Because visitor restrictions made communicating with a patient’s family a challenge, the hospital turned to FaceTime and text-based messaging.

Hospital colleagues learned a lot from that process, HSHS St. Anthony’s Interim President and CEO Mike Janis said, specifically understanding how simple some of the processes are that the hospital can deploy going forward.

“From a technology perspective, we have all been more accustomed now to using things like FaceTime and getting in connection with families,” he said. “Because for safety reasons we didn’t have visitors, we had to find a way our patients could connect with their families, how our nursing staff could connect with those families to give them updates in a different way.

“That has been an innovative piece for us. Having iPads available and working through the processes to make sure that everyone stays informed, I think that some level of that going forward for us is going to continue because we believe there’s a tremendous impact to keeping patients and their families safe whether during a pandemic or other communicable diseases.”

The technology also came in handy when communicating with a patient’s family internationally.

“Because we now have technology at our fingertips, and had some with family members out of the country, we’re able to connect them,” Jennings said. “Now that we know how to use it, we can really make a tremendous impact.”

The hospital is also able to overcome any language barrier by using CyraCom’s language services — including over-the-phone interpretation (OPI) and video remote interpretation (VRI) — to bring providers and patients together in hundreds of languages. The hospital has access to certified phone interpreters and video interpreters in seconds.

Enduring

Another new challenge the hospital faced was the sustained duration of the pandemic.

“Usually, when health care manages a crisis or when there’s a health care event or even an event of like tornadoes and things like that, they happen, they’re over in moments and then folks start to rebuild, recover and figure out what tomorrow looks like,” said Jennings. “This particularly has challenged us around the idea that that process of innovation didn’t really stop from the moment that the disease first arrived in the United States or in Effingham County — even ‘til now, where we continue to adapt our processes. How do we manage to continue to perform surgeries very safely within our hospitals and move patients in and out of the facility safely?

“At the same time, we care for patients that have the disease that carries a very high burden of mortality within the world and our community. That type of ongoing challenge I think is what makes the COVID pandemic a unique demonstration of innovation within HSHS.”

Jennings noted innovation is something the hospital didn’t have with past pandemics and is attainable now because of fast-paced technology and better access to it.

“But I do think a lot of it has to do with our willingness to recognize that innovation is critical for our success and for our livelihood and it didn’t just transect health care. We saw innovation in storefronts and picking up services at the curb rather than going into the store, and electronic shopfronts.

“The innovation that has been forced due to the social isolation and the speed that we needed to deal with it has been amazing. St. Anthony’s has had the tremendous luxury of being able to stay on the cutting edge of the technology with the medications — things like the antibody treatments that has allowed us to offer that within our own communities,” he said, referring to monoclonal antibody therapy, Bamlanivimab, for the treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adult and pediatric patients.

“Innovation allowed the hospital to attend to the regular business of treating other illnesses during the pandemic.

“Telemedicine is probably in my mind the thing that’s gotten the largest boost by far from this pandemic in a lot of ways — both the provider comfort level of being able to acknowledge that they’re able to deliver high-quality health care utilizing telemedicine but also acceptance by the consumer that you actually can have a really great interaction with someone via telemedicine, be able to receive the information that you need and be treated,” said Jennings. “I don’t see that going away.”

Although telemedicine emerged before the pandemic, it was not as widely used. Now, Jennings said it is an enormous part of the hospital’s overall care. The video-conferencing technology enables health care providers to care for patients remotely. The program was particularly useful in treating elderly patients who needed to see a cardiologist without the risk of them setting foot in the facility.

“Prairie Cardiovascular charged the way for us on how to do that and continue to care for those chronic illnesses in folks’ homes, and for many folks, that’s a better
way. I think telemedicine is clearly a victor out of this entire thing. It moved that technology and the acceptance of that technology so much faster and we’re excited that we’re able to be part of that,” said Jennings.

**Home care**

The hospital also found useful other ways of keeping patients in their home while caring for them. Jennings said home care has seen enormous expansion during the pandemic and for good reason.

“The best place to care for people is always in their least-restricted environment,” he said.

The hospital has done this through biomonitoring by providing the patient with a pulse oximeter, which measures the level of oxygen in the blood. Although COVID has been an example where oxygen levels are important, Jennings noted other chronic conditions, such as heart failure and COPD, all lend themselves to the use of biotechnology in the home.

“We advanced that very quickly in response to COVID, but those types of ideas aren’t going to go away as we deal with other chronic conditions,” he said.

The pandemic and need to keep more people in their homes prompted the hospital to launch a Safe at Home program.

“The pandemic provided an opportunity for us to evaluate how patients could become more involved in their own care,” said Jennings.

The Safe at Home program is a trial program that provided a care package to patients who had COVID to monitor their condition at home. The care package gave them tools to monitor their oxygen level and other symptoms and instructions on when to return to the hospital.

Daily contacts with hospital staff occurred to monitor their progress and to address any needs to allow them to recover at home.

“That type of an idea has just tremendous amounts of utility for other chronic diseases,” said Jennings, adding the pandemic accelerated the timeline for use of that type of technology. “I think we’ll see a lot more of that.”

**Elective surgeries**

COVID also allowed the hospital to take another look at its process of elective surgeries and procedures, which much like the rest of the country, were paused during the pandemic.

“That gave us two things. One, it gave us an opportunity to sit back and regroup and figure out: OK, we know we can’t put off elective surgery forever. Elective surgery isn’t elective at some point. Sooner or later what you’re seeking becomes urgent and so that pause literally gave us the opportunity to then develop safe processes in order to figure what that workflow looks like, how you move people through the facility in a way that’s safe,” said Jennings.

“Second, how do you also care for folks with COVID that need something that’s semi-elective in a safe way and keep those both separate. It also got us the time and ability to be able to gather adequate testing supplies and those types of things so as we relaunch the elective surgery programming at St. Anthony’s, and really nationwide, we knew that we could do it safely.”

The hospital is now better at caring for a complex population of patients during a pandemic while still caring for those needing elective procedures safely and timely.

**Community**

Jennings said the focus of the pandemic wasn’t purely about patient care.

While patient care and innovations related to it were a critical element of it, Jennings said there was also an enormous obligation to the workforce and working with them to be able to identify workflows that kept them safe, to provide them with the protective equipment that they needed, to be able to test them when they needed to be tested, to be able to screen them and do the things that they needed to do to stay safe.

The hospital also collaborated at a public level to provide education to the community to help decrease myths and deliver a truthful message about the disease and what it means.

“Whether it be making masks for us early in the pandemic or asking how they can donate food or coffee or how do they help in any way, it continues to blow my mind how amazing this community is. We’re very fortunate to be a part of it,” said Janis.

Janis also praised the work colleagues have done.

“This pandemic called upon all of us to elevate the ways that we care for our patients, our colleagues, our providers, our community, and I think we have more work to do but we were called to care and we delivered,” said Jennings.
American Fiber has been serving communities in the Midwest since 2011. American Fiber is a one stop shop for all of your underground utility, splicing and internet needs.

Owners Rod Brumleve and Nate Thompson started a partnership in 2011 that resides in Teutopolis, IL known as American Fiber Construction, INC.

American Fiber Construction offers directional boring, plowing and splicing throughout the Midwest. Throughout the years, the company has grown and has made the decision to give back to local communities. In May of 2019 they took the leap to start a new company, American Fiber Network! American Fiber Network (AFN) is a Fiber to the Home Network that offers homes better internet and phone services.

“What a great journey this has been! Rod and Nate have had this dream of offering Fiber to the Home to their hometown for the last 8 years and with a little faith and the experience they both have; they were finally able to make it happen!” – Morgan Brumleve

American Fiber Network currently offers services to Teutopolis, Green Creek and parts of Effingham. At this time, American Fiber Network is excited to announce that they are headed to Altamont to continue their build!

“Experiencing the 1 GIG fiber is honestly life changing especially during times like these. It’s providing more people with the option to work from home, continue schooling and to stay in touch with those friends and family!” said Brumleve

While they consider themselves family at American Fiber Network, many great people have worked at American Fiber for so long, they came to realize that their employees had become family throughout the years. Not only did their hard-working employees become family, but you are most likely to see Rod and Nate’s families at the office working as well.

We will be scheduling our Fall Customer Appreciation Night soon! Be sure to follow American Fiber Network on Facebook to learn more about upcoming events and future town builds!!

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The newest transformation for the company is a new showroom and office on the south side of Effingham making it easier for us to meet with customers and hold some design meetings with contractors and home owners alike. Clients can make an appointment and come check out what all we offer and bring measurements or pictures by and we can design the job with them.

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| 6. | Pepperoni|
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| 8. | Sausage and Pepperoni|

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Businesses large and small faced challenges in 2020 because of the pandemic — from orders to shut down to sometimes burdensome safety regulations. The aim was to keep customers and employees safe.

The challenges didn’t stop some businesses. In fact, the third quarter of 2020 saw a record-breaking 1.5 million businesses open in the U.S., according to the Census Bureau. That’s more than any other quarter since the bureau began tracking business formation.

The trend continued into the fourth quarter, with about a million new businesses opening their doors.

2020 saw a 24% increase over 2019 in new businesses, despite the challenges of starting an enterprise amid a turbulent economy and global pandemic.

In Effingham, plenty of businesses joined the 4.3 million others that opened in 2020, including retail shops, construction companies, medical providers, food services, and professional services.

Bobbaloo’s

Bobbaloo’s is a game shop on Fayette Avenue in Effingham that opened in September 2020, though the phrase “game shop” doesn’t capture all of the services that it offers. Like many similar stores, it’s a combination of retail store, event space, art gallery and community center.

In addition to selling board games, the store hosts game nights where people come to play their favorite game with friends — or strangers. They also sell vintage pop culture items like cassettes, vinyl records, t-shirts, antiques, jewelry, and art.

Jimi Bush, the store’s owner, is a web developer who wanted a change.

“I’m getting kind of burned out on that, so I wanted something new,” he said. “It came to me that there’s no game store in Effingham.”

He originally wanted to open an antique store. But Bush thought the market in Effingham had enough antique stores and that starting a new one would be an uphill battle. Since he’s a gamer himself, it was easy to spot that niche. He jumped.


Bobbaloo’s doesn’t specialize too much, having a presence in all kinds of gaming products.

“I focus on the four pillars: board games, tabletop games, role playing games, and video games,” Bush said.

The differences might seem small, but those types of games have largely different markets and customer bases. Board games are things like “Monopoly,” “Risk,” or “Settlers of Catan.” Tabletop games include card games like the hugely popular and competitive game “Magic: The Gathering.” In roleplaying games, players take on a character, like in “Dungeons and Dragons” or “Call of Cthulhu.” Finally, video games are games played with a computer or gaming system.

Though many come to the store to play, customers at Bobbaloo’s can also stop in and purchase a game from the store’s collection.
Of these categories, Bush said that two games drive his sales: “Magic: The Gathering” and “Warhammer 40,000.” Both require regular new purchases and have large communities of players.

“Magic: The Gathering” is played with decks of trading cards that players collect over time. Because a player’s success is shaped by the quality and types of cards they own, finding good cards is a big part of the game. That’s why Bush carries a stock estimated at 50,000 to 60,000 cards.

Even though just a handful of games drive the shop’s economics, a lot of Bobbaloo’s newfound success comes from the players who visit the store to play.

Ethan McQueen is a regular, but doesn’t always purchase something when he comes in. Instead, he plays games like “Dungeons and Dragons.”

“It gives those ‘home away from home’ vibes,” said McQueen of the store. “It’s important for a community to exist.”

McQueen has been playing games his whole life and is excited to see people join the gaming community. He does have a warning.

“I’ll beat anyone,” he said, laughing. “That’s a challenge.”

The size of the local gaming community came as a bit of a surprise to Bush, even if he’d been counting on just that for success.

“I didn’t know how many people were into this,” Bush said. “We’re to the point now where on Sundays, they have to park across the street.”

Bush has players and customers come in from Mattoon, Olney, and even as far as St. Louis because there are so few stores offering the products and services he does.

Because the people who come into the store often spend several hours there, COVID-19 has posed an interesting challenge for Bush.

“Events have been pretty small because of the COVID-19 situation,” he said. “My customers are all mostly very good about wearing a mask.”

Bush said opening after the pandemic began was actually helpful in some ways.

“I was able to get tables and things of that nature that I can keep sanitized,” he said.

**Schackmann Hearing**

Some businesses have opened that focus on serious, sometimes painful experiences.

Bonnie Porter (right) and Kerri Schackman (left) demonstrate the booth where Schackmann conducts hearing tests. The enclosed seat helps block sound, though Schackmann says some of her patients are unnerved by the alien look of the device.

Bonnie Porter (right) and Kerri Schackman (left) demonstrate the booth where Schackmann conducts hearing tests. The enclosed seat helps block sound, though Schackmann says some of her patients are unnerved by the alien look of the device.

Schackmann Hearing specializes in hearing tests, hearing aid repair, and other assorted ear care-related services. It opened Oct. 1 on Jefferson Avenue and Second Street in Effingham. It’s owned and operated by Kerri Schackmann, a licensed hearing-instrument specialist who has worked in Effingham for years.

“I have been a hearing specialist in Effingham for 12 years,” she said. In that time, she’s had patients ranging from their early 20s to age 105.

Starting her own practice had been in Schackmann’s mind for some time when she was laid off in March. She had been working at a practice with multiple locations and wanted the freedom of her own practice.

“I took the opportunity,” she said. Because she had free time and energy to put into starting her new business, she moved through the process quickly.

“Opening a practice like this usually takes a year-plus of preparation,” Schackmann said.

It took her just seven months.

“I don’t think it could have gone any smoother,” she said.

Most of her clients are in the age group most at risk of COVID-19, so precautions surrounding the virus were among her top priorities. She talked to the health department and expanded her business into new areas, such as offering some services curbside and doing remote hearing aid adjustments.

Douglas Bain (left) and Ethan McQueen (right) prepare for a session of Dungeons and Dragons on a Monday morning at Bobbaloo’s on Fayette Avenue.
"That is something that the hearing industry has worked on for years," Schackmann said.

New technologies allow people to request adjustments from their smartphone. She can make the changes and update patients’ hearing aids from her office.

“It’s a little too techy,” she said, pointing out that some older patients don’t like learning new apps. Some don’t have a smartphone.

“But for our tech-savvy folks, it’s great,” she said.

Schackmann offers a suite of services to her clients beyond hearing aids. She also offers ear care and noise protection, fitting ear plugs for swimmers, factory workers, and people who participate in shooting sports.

“We’ve always been big on hands-on customer care,” said Bonnie Porter, Schackmann’s business partner and mother. Porter, the patient care coordinator, has worked with her daughter for more than a decade, first getting into the hearing industry in 2008.

“It couldn’t be going better under COVID circumstances,” said Porter, pointing out she’s pleased with how the pair have been balancing staying safe and providing in-person care for those who need it.

As the two women have gotten comfortable in their new roles with the business, they have encountered new challenges. One of the big ones: new insurers.

“Over the course of the last several years, there has not been a lot of insurance coverage for hearing aids,” said Schackmann. “Jan. 1 always brings new insurance changes. It’s exciting!”

She added that this year, she’s noticed more insurers are covering hearing aids.

“They’re finally listening to their members,” she said.
The Effingham Convention and Visitors Bureau (Effingham Tourism) is gearing up for an exciting and eventful 2021! Over the last year, we have taken time to reimagine what travel looks like and to plan ahead for a new normal, in which topics like social distancing and face masks are an integral part of the conversation.

In 2020, we focused primarily on bringing the ‘Effingham Experience’ to the traveler through virtual events and experiences put on by our tourism partners. We held giveaways and encouraged local support of our restaurants and small businesses. Our WED Association members offered advice to local brides and grooms and shared creative solutions for hosting intimate and safe ceremonies. Major sporting events were put on hold, but both coaches and players delivered by encouraging play and activity while we all waited for their return. Visitors, far and wide, expressed their support and love for the Effingham area, and slowly, but surely, we began to welcome them back for socially-distanced experiences, including the TREC Trail and our drive-thru Wonderland in Lights display.

The holiday season brought with it an astounding response from both our community and our visitors, resulting in our most successful year yet of Wonderland in Lights. Nearly 10,000 cars visited our drive-thru light display during the holiday season and gave $27,557.87 in donations, which will be reinvested in next year’s displays. Countless others stopped in Downtown Effingham to view our larger-than-life, 3-D holiday light displays… including this year’s newest addition, a 34-foot, animated Christmas tree!

The year 2020 will, no doubt, be a tough year to follow, but we are eagerly anticipating welcoming back local events and beloved traditions in 2021. While we learn more about what it means to travel, gather and celebrate, in Effingham, in the coming months, we would like to thank those that have encouraged us to find inspiration and continue planning for the future.

You can read more about what we have planned for 2021 in our new and improved Visitor’s Guide, available at the Effingham Visitors Center, located at 1505 Hampton Drive. This year’s guide not only highlights our local events, but also the attractions, restaurants, shopping and more that bring visitors from cities near and far to our beautiful and vibrant community!
Civil Design, Inc.

Civil Design, Inc. is a multi-disciplined civil engineering firm established in 1996, with a focus on helping clients design quality infrastructure through successful, results-based projects. Our insight and experience, centered on Building Stronger Communities, allows us to empower our clients to make intelligent decisions on how to apply resources.

Just as we take great care and precision in designing our projects, here at CDI, we take that same great care in designing our culture and community. From a culture of safety to a culture of giving, every one of our team members strives to share their gifts and talents to support our partners.

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CDI’s culture is centered completely around Building Stronger Communities. Whether it be our client community of trusted partners in civic progress, business and engineering, our local community of the cities and neighborhoods where we live and work or our co-worker community of dedicated staff and their supportive families; CDI is committed to leading a positive and sustaining impact to all those we serve.

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Our high standard of compassionate care has earned us a reputation not only in this area but around the country and even internationally. We serve satellite clinics in Salem, Centralia, Breeze and Greenville. One of our hand surgeons, Nash Naam, MD is the current President of the American Association for Hand Surgery. This illustrates the superior level of professionalism that we offer to our patients.

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The firm, established on March 28, 2011, celebrates 10 years of providing legal representation and advice to individuals who are experiencing difficulties with the legal processes in one or more areas of their lives.

“Our clients appreciate our team’s empathy for their circumstances,” Bill said. “We carefully listen to their personal and legal problems and encourage persistence and patience with the civil and criminal courts and the Social Security Administration and courts of appeal.”

Bill graduated from the Indiana University-Bloomington Maurer School of Law in 1991, and was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of Illinois that same year. He was an associate and then law partner at an Effingham firm from 1991 until 2011.

Bill realized that he would be better able to serve clients in his areas of practice, law interests and business philosophies through more of a niche firm.

Sharing a theme common to many businesses in the Effingham area, Bill’s firm started with a basic business model and modest furnishings. In June 2015, Bill and his wife Nancy purchased the building at 109 N. Maple Street and the firm opened for business there in July 2015.

Bill’s law practice has evolved over the past ten years, with a current concentration in the legal areas of Social Security disability law for those who are unable to work as a result of one or more physical or mental impairments, family law, including divorce, paternity, domestic violence, adoption, and guardianship, and basic estate planning.

In November, Bill will celebrate the milestone of practicing law in the Land of Lincoln for 30 years. Bill is grateful to the many judges, attorneys, clients, and businesses who have contributed to his past practice of law and who continue to make the law a profession where Bill can pursue his passion of serving others.
Last year was challenging for many in the Effingham community as the COVID-19 pandemic caused lost jobs, death, and lifestyle changes. Businesses struggled. Many events and projects had to be put on hold or canceled because of safety concerns or financial caution.

But as Effingham starts to warm up this spring, the city is getting back to business, investing in underdeveloped areas, and putting big projects and events back on track. Effingham is eyeing its southern neighborhoods and business districts as its next major area for development. The city is already fronting millions of dollars to bring its vision to reality.

One of the most important ways the city is doing this is by expanding its tax increment financing (TIF) program as major parts of it start to expire. These TIF districts are one of the city’s main ways to develop infrastructure and business communities in targeted areas.

As 2021 began, the city approved the final step of a year-long process to add areas on South Banker Street, residential neighborhoods around South Side School, and a small area around Effingham High School to a TIF district. This will allow the city to use property tax dollars to repair water mains, sewer systems, and resurface streets, in addition to spending money to attract new businesses or help existing businesses.

The city has a long history of doing this, with its Downtown Rehabilitation program helping the majority of businesses in downtown Effingham repair or upgrade their buildings. Joe Sippers is the latest business to apply for aid, which will fund masonry maintenance to its brick facade.

A similar program exists on the south end of town and has helped fund improvements to Bob’s Discount Home Improvement on South Banker Street, among others.

Village Square Mall, the mostly vacant shopping center, is in the area that the city has added to its TIF program. City Administrator Steve Miller says that using the program to help the struggling property is a possibility.

Todd Hull, the city’s economic development director, thinks that the city’s steps to bring money into the south end of town are crucial.

“IT’s gonna be good for that part of town,” he said.

Hull added that some of the infrastructure improvements could start as early as this year.

The city has also recently approved selling bonds to finance the purchase of 154 acres for $2.7 million near Route 45 near John Boos & Co. and the Effingham County Memorial Airport. This purchase will be the first large land purchase the city has made in a few years, filling a desire to have a piece of property to offer to developers.

The city has used this development strategy before to offer land to large industrial projects like beverage distributor Koerner Distributor’s facility near Raney Street and seed company Beck’s Hybrids.

Meanwhile, a new kind of learning environment is in the works, with opportunities for high school students to learn vocational skills and for established workers to upskill as their fields change or as they want to get a competitive edge in the workplace.

The Effingham Regional Career Academy, or ERCA, is an ongoing partnership between industry and education, with 14 school districts, Lake Land College, and the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce working together to establish the school.

The project has been planned for more than five years and is led by Unit 40 Superintendent Mark Doan, Effingham County Chamber of Commerce President Norma Lansing and Lake Land College President Josh Bullock, who all sit on the ERCA board.

The facility housing the Academy will be built by Lake Land College near the Kluthe Center for Higher Education & Technology. Efforts are underway to secure funding through a state grant program. According to the intergovernmental agreement that forms the legal backbone of the school, even if Lake Land College can’t raise the capital funds to build a new facility, the school districts and private partners are committed to offering new educational opportunities to area residents.

“Our goal is to connect our students to
our businesses,” said Lansing, who is the vice president of the ERCA board. “The chamber is also working on developing internships and apprenticeships.”

Lansing is retiring in April, but won’t let that lessen her commitment to the project. “I continually want to do my part to see that to completion,” said Lansing.

“This is an opportunity for not only high-school kids, but incumbent workers and businesses,” said Doan, the board’s president, when the intergovernmental agreement was finalized in December.

Events

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many events in 2020 had to be canceled, postponed, or moved online. As Effingham County’s positivity rates drop and vaccines are starting to make their way into people’s arms, the large events that characterize Effingham’s summer and fall are tentatively on their way back.

“Things are looking up,” said Effingham Tourism Director Jodi Thoele. “Things can only go up from here.”

And yet, uncertainty still plagues the tourism bureau and the events industry in general.

“This summer things are kind of up in the air,” said Thoele. “I think this fall, there’s a really good chance for events to happen.”

Thoele, who is familiar with many of the events that happen throughout Effingham, is looking forward to late July, when the EffingHAM-JAM BBQ cookoff and Effingham Artisan Fair are scheduled to take place.

The eclectic mix of offerings at these two events typically include food vendors, barbecue contests, blown glass artists, clothes makers, ceramicists, and more.

Thoele points to the event as the kick off to the main festival and event season in Effingham.

“I’m excited to see how that plays out,” she said. “That’s one that’s gonna be interesting. That’s probably our biggest event in the downtown area.”

Safety will be a primary concern for these planners. The city of Effingham has required that all events on city property follow health department guidelines and Thoele says this requirement isn’t likely to go away soon.

Summer Sundown and Moccasin Creek music festivals, which are planned by musician and organizer Bill Passalacqua, are in the works. Organizers for Moccasin Creek have published a tentative schedule and Summer Sundown organizers recently announced they’re booking talent.

Thoele warns against thinking anything is certain in the event planning world.

“We just don’t know at this point,” she said. Thoele added that she isn’t fully confident in any event planned for before summer 2022. (Which she says isn’t as far away as you may think.)

“I’m confident that events will come back and probably come back bigger and better than before,” Thoele said.

Meijer?

In Effingham, Meijer has been a will-they-won’t-they story for years. That’s not likely to change this year. The project is still underway, but there are factors that will stop it from coming to Effingham in 2021.

“We believe that 2022 is construction. We are ready to get that completed, too,” said Miller.

Meijer has put significant amounts of money into the project already, having purchased the land and spent $600,000 on upgrading the roads around the lot, focusing on Ford Avenue.

As with many large-scale projects, the development has been in the works for several years despite the fact that they haven’t broken ground yet. Its origins lay in talks between city staff and Meijer, but the project was formally confirmed in 2016, with an initial goal to start construction in 2020.

Because of environmental requirements regarding the project’s land, the development had to be pushed two years in 2017. When the COVID-19 pandemic came along, that had to be shifted back even further because of Meijer’s wariness to open a new facility in a pandemic, according to Miller.

“These things can’t happen fast enough, but they take a lot of time to plan. They take a lot of time to get the funding in,” said Miller.

One of the areas added to the city’s TIF program, the neighborhood around South Side School.
A new and improved Jack Flash opened in 2020, replacing the Jack Flash that occupied the former Stuckey’s store building.

The new facility features seven diesel and 12 gasoline pumps. The 12 bays out front have six gasoline pump islands, with two offering gas and diesel. Four diesel fuel pump bays are located just north of the auto bays between the new 9,000-square-foot multipurpose convenience store and McDonald’s. Parking is available for up to 13 tractor-trailer vehicles.

A multi-million dollar expansion of The Equity in Altamont is underway. Construction started in the fall of 2020. On the north side is a 40-by-80-foot office building with an 80-by-120-foot attached shop. There is an 80-by-100-foot building dedicated to chemicals, with an attached 80-by-232-foot warehouse for chemicals and seed. Construction is expected to finish in 2021.

The City of Altamont renewed its Enterprise Zone with an extension that includes Beecher City. The renewed zone took effect on Jan. 1.

El Rancherito opened a new restaurant in Altamont in 2020, replacing the former Schultz’s Dairy Bar next to Schmidt Park.

Altamont took its first step toward clean energy in 2020 as community leaders and energy executives gathered in front of their newly installed solar panel array for a ribbon-cutting and dedication of the Altamont Solar Plant.

Representing Altamont on the IMEA Board of Directors is former Mayor Larry Taylor, who was instrumental in bringing solar power to the city. The new solar power array and associated equipment take up 4.9 acres of city-owned property, produces a maximum capacity of 500 kW and is made up of 1,674 solar panels.

The Unit 10 Board of Education extended a contract with Altamont High School Principal Jerry Tkachuk through the end of the year. Assistant Principal and Athletic Director Peggy Bueker will fill the principal position after the first of the year.

Former Superintendent Jim Littleford returned to the district to serve as superintendent while the board of education searches for someone to fill the position full-time.
Teutopolis has always been a progressive town. To show you what we have been doing the last year or so, hop in and I’ll take you for a ride around town.

Entering the village of Teutopolis from the east, you will notice a large white building on your left. This is the new Canarm Distribution Center. Canarm is a Canadian Manufacturer of lighting fixtures and commercial blowers. The distribution center will be fully operational by this spring.

The next building we see is Farmweld with its recently finished modern office complex. Farmweld manufactures equipment for the pork producing industry.

As we enter town, let’s take a detour south on Oak Street. Here you can see our new subdivision, Prairie View. New homes have been going up at a constant pace since its opening in 2017. At this pace, we will have to start looking for land to build our next subdivision.

Let’s go a couple blocks to the north and we see the new Knights of Columbus Council and Banquet Hall. The previous one was destroyed by fire. Rising from the ashes is the bigger, better hall you see today.

Just across the railroad tracks you can see the new Sister Ethelbert Center. This is a place where parishioners and church groups can hold meetings and get-togethers. The center has a very inviting and spacious foyer, along with a kitchen and meeting room, and also an entrance to the Monastery Museum.

I will now take you back to Main Street and turn west, where your eyes will immediately be drawn to a spectacular mural depicting our downtown main street. The mural features well-known images of the past.

If you peel your eyes off the mural for a moment and look to your right you will see another beautiful sight, our new Village Hall! The hall features a larger meeting room, a kitchen for small events, a city clerk and treasurer office, mayor’s office and conference room, along with the police department headquarters. The new hall will be move-in-ready in late February.

Driving west on Main Street, you will notice on your right the Community Support Center has a new facelift. Farther down the road on the south side is a major change. The old three-story high school building is gone! New classrooms were added with changes made to the area where the old building stood, presenting a whole new look.

Last, but certainly not least, is Commercial Drive. A few short years ago this was farmland. Now we have five new businesses, with the latest being a Bobcat dealership that recently opened.

So, as you can see Teutopolis is constantly on the move. We are always working on new and exciting plans for our future.
DIETERICH

Growth and progress underway

During the spring and summer of 2021, Dieterich will need a sign that says “Pardon the Mess — Growth and Progress Underway!”

In addition to the constant construction of new residential homes in Hartke Subdivision, the Village of Dieterich is slated to have several construction projects going on simultaneously throughout the village.

Liberty Park will be getting a fantastic facelift, with 50% of the project’s funding coming from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant proceeds. Phase I of the project has already been completed, with the Liberty Park pond being drained and dug out.

The second phase will begin as soon as weather allows. A new ADA fishing pier and parking area will be added to the south side of the pond. The two existing tennis courts will be removed and replaced, along with new fencing and lighting. The new courts will also be lined for pickleball. The Liberty Park pavilion will be expanded on the south side and the restrooms will be expanded on the north side. New playground equipment will be added along with new fencing and lighting.

Beautification efforts will continue downtown as the village prepares for the second phase of a large beautification project. Decorative street and pedestrian lighting, ADA sidewalks, gutters and storm sewers, decorative boulevards and asphalt streets will be constructed on portions of Pine Street, Church Street, Park Street and W. Section Street.

A new dedicated pickup and drop-off lane will also be added in front of the Elementary School on Pine Street to increase safety for Unit 30 students and aid with the school traffic congestion. Seventy percent of this project will be paid for by the Illinois Department of Transportation 2016 Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant funds.

On the east side of Dieterich, infrastructure construction will soon be underway for the new Dieterich Industrial Park East development, which will boast 24 lots for commercial and industrial development. The water mains and sanitary sewer mains have already been installed. Ameren gas and three-phase underground electric will begin installation soon, along with 80,000-pound concrete curbs, gutters and storm sewers.

Dieterich Industrial Park East is conveniently located along Illinois Route 33 and only seven miles to Interstate 70. Lots range in size from 0.8 acres to 7-plus acres and sell for only $10,000 per acre.

Dieterich is a wonderful place to grow your current business or start a new business. The new home under construction on Lot 23 in Hartke Subdivision (315 Independence Drive) is the grand prize in Dieterich’s Ultimate Home Giveaway raffle. The winner of the raffle will have the choice of the new three bedroom, two bathroom home valued at $250,000 or $100,000 cash. The drawing will be held on May 22, 2021. Tickets are $100 each or six for $500. All proceeds from the raffle are going toward the capital fundraising campaign to build the new Dieterich Community Center, which will be a combined day care and recreation center. More info can be found at www.dieterichcommunitycenter.com and raffle tickets can be purchased online or at all area Dieterich Bank locations, all Wright’s Furniture locations, Old Mac’s or at Dieterich Village Hall.

Businesses or individuals who are looking to make a lasting impact on the Dieterich community are urged to consider donating toward the capital campaign to build the Dieterich Recreation Center. There are many levels of sponsorship available that will provide permanent and significant recognition for your donation inside or outside the new Community Center building. Call Dieterich Village Hall at 217-925-5410 for more information.

Dieterich was planning to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Liberty Park arches with a celebration in 2020, but COVID-19 halted plans for public gatherings. When the arches were constructed in 1920, they were built as the entrance monument to Liberty Park in honor of the Dieterich World War I Machine Gun Company. In 2000, the arches were incorporated into the impressive Dieterich Veterans Memorial. To commemorate the special anniversary, Dieterich resident Carrie Galbraith compiled pictures and wrote a 12-page commemorative booklet celebrating the historic arches and their birthday.

The booklet also pays tribute to Dieterich American Legion Post 628, which also celebrated 100 years in 2020. The booklet can be purchased at Dieterich Village Hall for $5 each, with all proceeds going to the Dieterich Fourth of July fund. The booklets can also be shipped for an additional $5. Please call Village Hall at 217-925-5410 for purchasing information.

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By Brittny Gipson, Economic Development Coordinator

Thanks to a grant, Liberty Park pond is part of a major facelift of the park. The pond was drained and dug out as part of Phase I of the project.

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Shown is the house on Lot 23 in Hartke Subdivision that will be given away in the Dieterich Ultimate Home Giveaway raffle.
BEECHER CITY

Enterprise zone, entertainment, new restaurant

We started 2020 with high hopes for the year.

Loudon Country had been performing at the Kluthe Center the third Saturday of the month and the last two shows before COVID-19 hit were packed. There were 150 at the last show and people came from as far away as Decatur and Champaign.

Beecher City has joined the Altamont Enterprise Zone, and we are hopeful that we can bring new businesses to the city. Residential is also included in this enterprise zone, so we will be trying to encourage new home building as well as renovations. We are hoping COVID-19 will ease up, and the new restaurant (The Pit Stop) can finally open for business.

We managed to get a few tractor pulls in when COVID-19 restrictions allowed for it, and they were fantastic. We have been told by the O.M.R.O. that we have the second best track in the region. Several of the participants have told us it’s the best track they have driven on.

Our Christmas spirit was unscathed by COVID-19. Rhodes’ Old Fashioned Christmas Celebration was a huge success. It has been getting better each year. They have it the first Saturday after Thanksgiving every year with a tree lighting, games for the kids, cookies and hot chocolate and singing.

They also have Santa and horse and buggy rides. It’s just a great time! With the help of the city workers we managed to renovate several street light decorations, and we started a Christmas drive-through display at the park.

We will be having a contest every year for decorations and hope to build on the display every year. We have hopes of having a Santa house and visits from Santa. The sky is the limit to what events we can include. The bank even had the high school art class paint their windows. Yes, the Christmas spirit has thrived in our little community.

We received a generous donation from an estate that will be used to make much needed renovations to the Kluthe Center and the park, so things are only going to get better.

The Kluthe is such a great asset to this community. We have everything from Meals on Wheels to wedding receptions, reunions and funeral dinners there. And of course it is crucial to the Corn Fest, Loudon Country shows and so much more.

The Beecher City Library will be getting high-speed fiber-optic internet soon and is really a nice little library.

This year is the 20th Anniversary of the Beecher City Foodliner, and they are celebrating with prizes. Just sign the back of your receipt to enter. A big thank you to them! It is so convenient to have this little store available — they do so much for the community.

By Rita Sue Felty, Beecher City Village President
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Carl Fearday, PA-C
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Effingham Daily News

The Effingham Daily News is a newspaper serving the counties of Effingham, Clay, Cumberland, Fayette, Jasper, and Shelby counties in Illinois. The Joseph McNaughton family owned the paper for 46 years. It is now owned by Community Newspaper Holdings, Inc.

The Effingham Daily News is published on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Every other Monday features a page from the Effingham County Museum. The Wednesday edition features an Effingham County Farm Bureau newsletter page as well as farm news and information on area auctions. Friday’s edition of the paper features a Homes section with listings by area real estate agencies as well as home improvement services. Saturday’s weekend edition features a color comics section and a TV Entertainment section. The Effingham Daily News also publishes a total market coverage edition each Wednesday called Crossroads Supersaver.

To fulfill the newspaper’s purpose of serving the community and providing information to readers, the newspaper is proud to also provide an online edition at effinghamdailynews.com, in addition to our complete news edition in print.

The Effingham Daily News is committed to keeping the residents informed about what is occurring in the communities throughout the area. Each publication includes local, state and national news, special interest stories, weather, obituaries, opinion page with letters to the editor and local and syndicated columnists, upcoming events, sports news, classifieds, accidents and Effingham County jail reports, and news from The Associated Press. Readers are encouraged to email us at news@effinghamdailynews.com to submit news items of interest.

In addition to these publications, the Effingham Daily News also publishes a quarterly magazine titled Effingham Magazine in March, May, September and November. Effingham Magazine is a portrait of life in the Effingham region dedicated to providing local feature content for readers. Presented on the canvas of a glossy full-color magazine, we bring to life the people, places and events that shape our communities. Effingham’s premier lifestyle magazine reflects the excitement and energy that makes our region vibrant. Each issue of Effingham Magazine focuses on a seasonal theme, cover story, impactful photography and feature departments, providing a highly efficient and effective marketing tool for an advertiser to reach a targeted audience. Our regular features provide interesting, useful information that also entertains readers. Those features include Food & Drink, Home & Garden, Health & Fitness, Snapshots and an Events Calendar.

Another magazine published once a year by the Effingham Daily News is the Progress edition. Progress is an annual publication dedicated to exploring the growth, development and the advancement of the Effingham region. From infrastructure to entrepreneurship, legacy companies to new businesses, Progress is dedicated to showcasing the best our region has to offer. Progress is an opportunity to showcase your business in a publication that is distributed throughout the year to visitors, new residents, developers and prospective new businesses. Progress is utilized as a recruiting tool and as a means to share the news of extraordinary growth and prosperity in the Effingham area.

Discover is also a magazine published once a year by the Effingham Daily News. Discover is a guide to business services and organizations in Effingham County.

Twice a year in the spring and fall, the Effingham Daily News publishes A Day Away, a publication about special events, festivals, shopping, attractions and more for the whole family to enjoy in Central and South Central Illinois.

The Effingham Daily News also publishes multiple special sections throughout the year, including Citizen of the Year. Nominations are submitted by readers and a panel of judges choose the Citizen of the Year who is announced at the annual Effingham County Chamber of Commerce banquet.

Effingham Daily News journalists are consistently recognized for the quality of their work. The newspaper was recognized again in 2020 for General Excellence by the Southern Illinois Editorial Association after sweeping the journalism categories of best local news coverage, best local sports coverage and best editorial writing. The staff was honored by the Illinois Associated Press Media Editors in 2020 with the Public Service award for in-depth coverage of the legalization of recreational marijuana in Illinois. Effingham Daily News advertising department is also recognized with several awards each year by the Illinois Press Association.
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Neoga, Illinois is located on Route 45 and right off Interstate 57 at exit 177. We are nestled between Effingham to the south and Mattoon to the north. Easy access to both of these industry rich cities makes Neoga the perfect place to call home. Neoga is a city in Cumberland County and had a population of 1,636 with the 2010 census. Neoga was incorporated in 1856. Neoga means “deer” in the Kickapoo language.

Neoga hosts a strong banking and finance industry, with the First National Bank of Toledo and First Mid-Illinois Bank and Trust having locations within Neoga. The City of Neoga provides a variety of recreational facilities, with public parks featuring tennis and basketball courts. In addition to several area lakes with swimming, boating and water sports. For the avid outdoors person, nearby Fox Ridge and Lincoln Trail State Parks offer camping, hiking, snowmobiling, walking paths and horseback riding.

Neoga is home to Neoga Grade and High School. Lake Land Community College, located 12 miles north of the City of Neoga, offers access to higher education and workforce training programs.

Eastern Illinois University in Charleston (25 miles north-east) provides students access to educational programs leading to bachelor’s and master’s degrees in a variety of academic programs.

Sigel is an incorporated town in Shelby County, Illinois with a population of 373 at the 2010 census.

The town was named after Franz Sigel, (1824–1902), a Union general in the American Civil War. Jack Berch, singer, was born in Sigel. Sigel is home to St. Michael grade school and Sigel Community Bank, a branch of Teutopolis State Bank. It is also home to several agricultural related businesses as farming is a cornerstone of this community and area.
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Newton

Jasper County was formed in 1831 out of Clay and Crawford Counties. It was named for Sgt. William Jasper, a Revolutionary War hero from South Carolina. During the defense of Fort Moultrie in 1776, the staff of the American flag was shot away. Sgt. Jasper attached the flag to a pole and stood on the wall waving the flag at the British until a new staff was erected.

Newton is located a short drive from two major interstate systems and several airports accommodating small planes as well as commuter flights. Locally, state routes 33 and 130 are both class two truck routes and rail services are provided by both the Indiana Railroad and Illinois Central Railroad.

Friendly neighborhoods and a progressive school system make you feel at home right away, and there is always something to occupy your time. Hunting lodges, two parks (including an aquatic center and skate park) and a drive-in are just a few of our recreation options.

If you are thinking of making Newton your home or the home of your business, or if you are just passing through, we hope you enjoy our mix of small town ideals and big city ambition!

Notable residents:

- Glenn Brummer, baseball catcher for the Major League Baseball St. Louis Cardinals and Texas Rangers; member of the 1982 World Champion Cardinals

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- Albert Isley, Illinois judge, lawyer, and state senator
- Burl Ives, folk singer, author, and actor
- Ross Wolf, baseball pitcher; plays for the SK Wyverns of the Korea Baseball Championship; formerly played for several Major League Baseball teams

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**Downtown Effingham Business Group Events:**
Check our [facebook](http://facebook) page at experiencedowntowneffingham for Upcoming Events!

**A special “Thank You” to Norma Lansing, Effingham Chamber of Commerce President - For All Your Help & Guidance with the DEBG!**

---

**The Beanstalk Boutique**

Personalized gifts for babies thru adults!
You pick it out, we personalize it!

Open Monday 1-5:30, Tuesday 10-5:30 Wednesday 10-5:30 Thursday 10-5:30, Friday 10-5 and Saturday 10-1
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---

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Ph. 217-347-6624
noahsarkpetshoppe.com

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Closed Sunday-Tuesday

Spring and summer arrivals being put out now!

---

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Open Mon., Tues., & Thurs. 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
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205 E. Madison Toledo, IL 62468
217-849-2981

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Where the Locals Eat
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Saving for the future?

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Greenup, Illinois, is an opportunity to step back in time and see a simpler way of life, while never leaving the amenities to which we have become accustomed. Platted by William C. Greenup in 1834, while he served in a supervisory capacity on the National Road, Greenup has a rich and interesting history. Residents and visitors alike can appreciate Greenup for its numerous elements of charm.

The village of Greenup is a small community of just over 1,500 residents, located along interstate 70 and at the junction of Illinois Route 130 and Illinois Route 121. The National Road, US Route 40, runs through the southern edge of Greenup as well providing another source of tourism and transportation. Greenup is strategically located 23 miles to the east of Effingham, 25 miles to the south east of Mattoon, and 16 miles south of Charleston, providing residents with numerous options for dining, entertainment and employment all within a short commute.

That is not to say that Greenup doesn’t have an impressive offering of these services itself, particularly given its size! Greenup boasts a local winery, numerous antique stores, a state of the art Love’s Travel Center, several restaurants, and many small shops to frequent. The locals appreciate that they have their own grocery store, and various convenience options should they not want to travel. The school district, located outside of town, prepares students to become productive citizens; people wishing to pursue higher education or learn a trade have access to Eastern Illinois University and Lake Land Community College, both less than an hour’s commute from the community. The largest employer in Greenup is by far Evapco, employing over 400 skilled workers, building high end industrial AC and refrigeration units that are utilized around the world!

Within the village proper, Greenup has 8 restaurants to provide a variety of choices. After dinner, residents or visitors can treat themselves to a unique downtown experience with the view of the store fronts which provide Greenup its title, “The Village of Porches”. The porches have a style that would be perhaps as much at home in 1880’s New Orleans as a rural community in Illinois, and they give visitors an enjoyable look at the beauty of historic architecture in the area. For those interested in seeing beautiful architecture up close, Greenup is also home to a modern covered bridge, built in 2000 and boasting no weight restriction on its use. The Greenup covered bridge has an observation deck as well as a nature trail along the banks of the Embarrass River. History lovers will enjoy that the original covered bridge that had occupied the site, used timbers laid by Abe and Thomas Lincoln. Of course, being the land of Lincoln, the ties to the Lincoln family don’t end with the bridge. Greenup is just south of the famed Lincoln Log Cabin, home to the Lincoln’s after they moved to Illinois, as well as the Thomas Lincoln Cemetery, the final resting place of Abraham’s father and step-mother.

For those looking to make an extended trip of their visit to Greenup, there are options from which to choose. Greenup has two motels as well as a new bed and breakfast in a restored historical building along the National Road. During that extended stay, visitors may want to visit our two local museums or take in one of the two local parks. Whatever your reason for visiting, Greenup has your needs and your comfort covered.