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An alternative to surgery is regenerative medicine which can replace surgery in some cases. The goal of the joint injection treatment is to restore patient's natural joint surface, rather than to replace with an artificial joint.



Kingery Printing

Kingery Printing is an innovative, family-owned and operated company dedicated to the power and reliability of print. Built on the cornerstones of integrity, craftsmanship, and customer service, Kingery has been a trusted print partner for over fifty-six years.

Kingery Printing was founded in 1968 by John and Dolores Kingery in a rented building on the courthouse square in Effingham, Illinois. Since those humble beginnings, Kingery Printing has blazed new trails and established itself as an industry leader, now employing over 200 people across two locations in Effingham and Mattoon,

Illinois.

“When my father started the company in 1968, the transition from hot lead to offset printing was just taking place,” said President Mike Kingery. “We entered the market with offset presses and we’ve been on the cutting edge ever since.”

June 2024 marked KPC’s entry into the short-run digital market with the installation of the RICOH VC80000 high-speed digital inkjet web press in Kingery’s Effingham location. KPC is proud to be the first book printer in the world to install this press. Throughout the Fall of 2024—following the press installation—Kingery added

two digital cutters, a perfect binder, and a digital stitcher.

For many years, Kingery Printing focused on the medium-run and long-run magazine and catalog market. After purchasing United Graphics in Mattoon in December 2017, the company began transitioning into the book market. Today, 50 percent of their business comes from printing books.

While continuing to serve the medium-run and long-run markets, this new digital equipment establishes Kingery Printing in the short-run market and rounds out the trifecta to being a one-stop partner for their publishers. Kingery explained, “This equipment allows us to print one book or up to 5,000 copies, and do so competitively, thus opening up the short-run book and direct mail markets to us.”

Following the first successful e-book launch in 2007 with the Amazon Kindle, the popularity of e-books has waned in recent years. Analog books (physically printed books) are by far the most popular reading format today and may be for years to come. However, warehousing large quantities of books has almost become a thing of the past. When a book is ordered on-line today, the order goes directly to the printing press and is printed, bound, and shipped within a couple days. When it arrives at your doorstep, it is highly likely human hands have never touched the book. It is amazing that is where the industry exists today.

The print industry believes three markets will continue to grow long into the future: the book, packaging, and label markets. To celebrate more milestone anniversaries, Kingery will need to continue to pivot as products evolve and new technologies are introduced. But for today, they are pleased to be utilizing the latest technologies available in the industry.

Kingery Printing extends their gratitude to their staff—both past and present—and the continued community support which allows them to continue to grow into the next generation of print. “We are a printing family committed to our industry and we will remain viable long into the future with these investments,” Mike Kingery stated.

Kingery Printing has built their reputation over the years in the industry locally and across the country as a trusted partner for their clients. They would appreciate the opportunity to discuss your next print project—and like the College Football Playoffs Limited Edition Game Day Programs they delivered—be your trusted print partner as well.



Seated is John Kingery, co-founder of Kingery Printing with son Mike Kingery, Kingery Printing President.



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Roy Schmidt Honda



December 2024 marked the 10th anniversary of the opening of Roy Schmidt Honda in Effingham. The dealership celebrated an anniversary during December with the 12 Days of Christmas giveaway for customers. The celebration ended with the grand prize drawing for the all new, small electric scooter, the Honda Motocompact! These scooters are currently in stock and ready for sale at Roy Schmidt Honda! Even though Roy Schmidt Honda has only been in Effingham for 10 years, Honda has been around for a very long time providing quality vehicles and service.

Honda established operations in North America in 1959. Today, the company employs about 42,000 associates in the region, who are engaged in the development, manufacturing, sales and service support of Honda automobiles. Based on

its longstanding commitment to build products close to the customer, Honda operates 18 major manufacturing plants in North America, working with over 750 suppliers in the region to produce a diverse range of quality products. Honda has built automobiles in North America for over 40 years and, in 2023, more than 99% of all Honda automobiles sold in the U.S. were produced in North America.

Honda also conducts research and development activities at 23 facilities in North America where we fully design, develop and engineer many of the company's North American-made products.

Honda offers a full line of clean, safe, fun and connected vehicles sold through more than 1,000 independent U.S. Honda dealers, including Roy

Schmidt Honda, providing award-winning sales and service to the area. The award-winning Honda lineup includes the Civic and Accord, along with the HR-V, CR-V, Passport, Prologue and Pilot sport utility vehicles, the Ridgeline pickup, and the Odyssey minivan. The Honda electrified vehicle lineup, representing more than a quarter of total sales in 2024, includes the all-electric Prologue SUV, hybrid-electric Accord, CR-V, and Civic, and Fuel-Cell-electric CR-V e:FCEV, with a hybrid Prelude set to join the lineup in late 2025.

There are many new and exciting things happening at Roy Schmidt Honda. Please take the time to visit the dealership and experience the Roy Schmidt Difference! Roy and all the employees of Honda would like to say Thanks to all the area customers for a great 10 years!



Barlow Lock & Security

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 over 20 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 sys-

tems. 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.

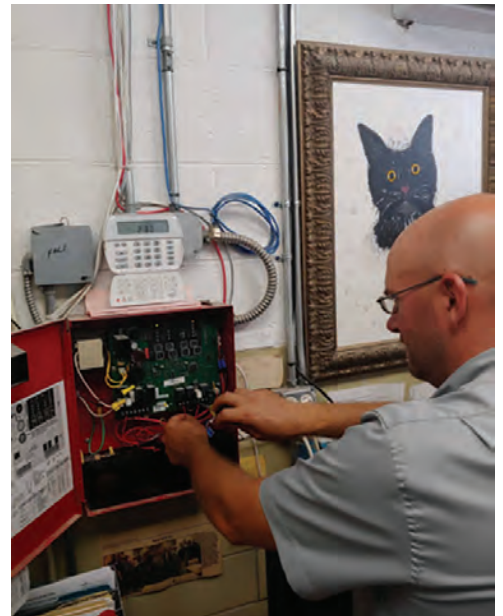
Today, customers of Barlow can have custom systems set up at their businesses and residences. Immediate notifications and monitoring are available on smart phones and electronic

devices.

Unlike other security companies, Barlow doesn't require monthly monitoring. Central Station Monitoring is an option.

Systems are custom designed to fit customer needs, including remote access, police notification and other features. Just the presence of an alarm system often provides valuable deterrence.

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Elizabeth Eberspacher Nohren Adoption/Reproductive Technology; Close/Private Held Business; Family; ADR: Family; Trust/Will/Estate	Dove & Dove	Shelbyville	217.774.2137
Bret P. Coale Commercial Litigation; Medical Malpractice Defense; Personal Injury Defense: General	Hughes Tenney Postlewait Coale LLC	Decatur	217.428.5383
R. Samuel Postlewait Agriculture; Close/Private Held Business; Commercial Litigation; Real Estate: Commercial; Trust/Will/Estate	Hughes Tenney Postlewait Coale LLC	Decatur	217.428.5383
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William J. Harrington Personal Injury: General	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign/Decatur	217.356.1570
Robert M. Javoronok Jr. Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign/Decatur	217.356.1570
Kathy A. Olivero Workers' Compensation	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign/Decatur	217.356.1570
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James T. Jackson Commercial Litigation; Personal Injury Defense: General; School	Samuels Miller Schroeder Jackson & Sly LLP	Decatur	217.429.4325
Craig W. Runyon Banking/Financial Institutions; Creditor Rights/Commercial Collections; RE: Commercial; RE: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate	Samuels Miller Schroeder Jackson & Sly LLP	Decatur	217.429.4325
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Timothy M. Shay Personal Injury: General; Personal Injury: Prof'l Malpractice; Workers' Compensation	Shay & Associates Law Firm LLC	Decatur	217.425.5900



Nicholas T. Williams Personal Injury: General	Shay & Associates Law Firm LLC	Decatur	217.425.5900
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Kenneth D. Reifsteck Civil Appellate; Workers' Compensation Defense	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500
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Lott H. Thomas Trust/Will/Estate	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500
John T. Wozniak Close/Private Held Business; Real Estate: Commercial; Real Estate: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate	Wozniak & Associates	Urbana	217.367.1647

These **EMERGING LAWYERS** have been identified by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois who are 40 years of age or younger OR who have been admitted to the practice of law for 10 or fewer years.

Gina Couri-Cyphers Civil Appellate; Personal Injury: General	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign/Decatur	217.356.1570
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AN EFFINGHAM DAILY NEWS PUBLICATION

2025 EDITION

[Feature STORY]

Short-term rentals gaining popularity in Effingham County



John Wessel sits on the couch of the Shoe Inn after giving a tour. Photo by Marie Adamick

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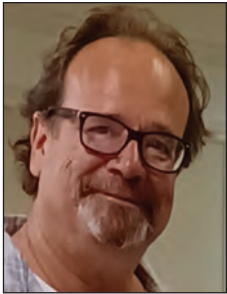
ON THE COVER

In this 2023 file photo, an aircraft marshaller directs a plane traveling down the runway at Effingham County Regional Airport during an EAA Fly-In.

Nick Taylor photo

[From the EDITOR]

Our 2025 edition of Progress looks at the way our communities build strong foundations for future generations.



For example, Effingham city officials have annexed more than 250 acres of property into the city in the last four years. While many involved existing businesses that have become contiguous to the city limits, the recent annexation of a residential subdivision and others may hold the key to helping

address the city's housing shortage.

Meanwhile, Rachel and Zach Frichtl are planning to break ground soon on a \$2.5 million, 9,227-square-foot meat-processing plant and grocery store in the Dieterich Industrial Park.

"It's a big deal," said Village Clerk and Economic Development Coordinator Brittny Gipson. "We are very excited for the opportunity for the Frichtls and we're blessed that they've picked Dieterich to bring their business here, to the industrial park."

The Frichtls are financing the project themselves. The state is assisting with tax breaks.

Transportation infrastructure is a key ingredient to building those foundations. Just look at what's happening at the Effingham County Regional Airport, where officials hope to entice more corporate traffic and lure more business to Effingham.

The work needed to achieve that will begin this spring when contractors break ground on a runway extension project that will lengthen the runway by nearly 900 feet. The new 6,000-foot runway will include a 2,200-foot taxiway extension to increase aircraft safety

and capacity. The Rebuild Illinois Capital Improvement grant is funding 90% of the \$5 million project, with the county providing 10%.

It is not the only project slated for this year. Officials are also hoping to start construction on a new 10-bay T-hangar. The \$1.4 million project also includes some access pavements to and around the hangar. The additional pavement will open up some adjacent property for additional hangar space, especially if somebody wants to put in another corporate box hangar, according to Airport Superintendent Greg Koester.

Elsewhere, businesses and organizations are trying to revitalize the south side of Effingham. New businesses and activities are slowly but surely bringing new life to the area. One exciting prospect is a rebirth of Village Square Mall. We also examine other things happening on that side of town.

A growing trend across the area has been the introduction of short-term rentals that lure visitors to our area — and to our local attractions and businesses.

These stories and more make up the 2025 edition of Progress.

Jeff Long
Editor

Jeff Long is the editor of the Effingham Daily News. He is a 1987 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has worked for newspapers in England, Pennsylvania and Virginia. For 13 years, he was a reporter and later an editor at the Chicago Tribune. A past president and current board member of the Illinois Associated Press Media Editors, he lives in Altamont with his wife, Karen.

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 22 years in news and magazine publications. She is a lifelong resident of Effingham, where she resides with her husband, Tim, and daughter, Leah.



Marie Adamick is the newest reporter at the Effingham Daily News. Before deciding to major in journalism, she considered majoring in international business or chemistry. She graduated from University of Cincinnati in 2024 with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and a minor in History. A greater Cincinnati native, she enjoys traveling, collecting music, and going on hikes. She recently moved to Effingham to start her job at the paper and has family in Wisconsin, Cincinnati and St. Louis.



Focus groups have been discussing Effingham's 2050 Comprehensive Plan. Story on page 50.
Photo by Marie Adamick

Meat processing plant and grocery store coming to Dieterich

Story by Jeff Long

Rachel and Zach Frichtl are planning to break ground soon on a \$2.5 million, 9,227-square-foot meat-processing plant and grocery store in the Dieterich Industrial Park.

"It's a big deal," said Village Clerk and Economic Development Coordinator Brittny Gipson. "We are very excited for the opportunity for the Frichtls and we're blessed that they've picked Dieterich to bring their business here, to the industrial park."

The Frichtls are financing the project themselves. The state is assisting with tax breaks.

Frichtl Processing and Slaughtering will specialize in processing beef, hogs and deer, providing locally sourced meat products as well as offering products conveniently packaged for customers in the retail store.

The goal is to increase food access for residents, support local agriculture, and promote sustainable food practices, addressing the nutritional needs of the region and bolstering economic growth while retaining and creating jobs for the local economy.

The processing center will employ six full-time and the store will have four employees, according to Zach Frichtl.

"Our customers would be anybody bringing in beef or a hog to get processed to take back home for freezer meat," Frichtl said. "We'll also do deer processing."

The couple lives north of Effingham with their daughter, Morgan, 6. A second child is due in April.

"Dieterich is a growing community that we fell in love with," Frichtl said. "We both want to move there, eventually. It's kind of in between from where I'm from and where she's from."

Zach Frichtl, 35, is from Wendelin and attended school in Noble. Rachel Frichtl, 26, is from Teutopolis.

"Both of us grew up on a family farm," Frichtl said. "Where Rachel grew up, they had milk cows. She grew up on a dairy farm, and they always butchered their own meat for their own use. I grew up on a grain farm, which was also a livestock farm. We always butchered and processed our own meat."

They closed on two lots in the industrial park in November for \$18,600. Gipson said that 14 of the park's 23 lots have now been sold since it opened in 2022.

"We sold these lots at a huge loss," Gipson said of the growing community's efforts to attract industrial development. "They are fully developed, shovel-ready, with electric, water, sewer, fiber internet, gas,

Pictured from left to right are Dieterich Village Clerk and Economic Development Coordinator Brittny Gipson, Village President Brad Hardiek, Zach Frichtl and Rachel Frichtl. Submitted photo



concrete streets and gutters.”

“Businesses tend to seek out communities that are growing,” she added. “And we are underserved when it comes to things like a grocery store. We had one many, many years ago. We lack a grocery store. The ability to get fresh produce, fresh meat is something that every healthy community needs to have. We have a Dollar General. So we have the dry goods box checked. But for true grocery store items – that’s something we’ve always been hopeful to bring here.”

Frichtl said the price for land in the industrial park and its location were factors in choosing Dieterich.

“It definitely made us take a second look,” he said. “The lots that were available are right along the highway. And the price of the property. The storefront, to be in Dieterich, is beneficial – as opposed to being out in a rural area.”

He noted that besides Dieterich’s need for a grocery store, meat processing will benefit the whole area.

“We’ll be 20 miles from our closest competitor,” Frichtl said. “There’s at least a six-to-eight month window from when you book an animal in until you can actually get one processed.”

He said the plant will be a good neighbor.

“There should not be an issue with noise or smell,” Frichtl said. “We’ve enclosed all our pens, so there will be no noise or smell. We’ll have state-of-the-art plumbing, approved by the state inspector.

“Local producers will have a place to get animals slaughtered to get more of the local beef and local pork to the community. And then also we will buy all locally sourced animals for our processing for the store.”

The state’s incentive is through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for an Economic Development for a Growing Economy for Startups tax credit.

“Through incentive programs like EDGE for Startups, Illinois is empowering businesses to expand, driving economic growth, and uplifting communities statewide,” Gov. JB Pritzker said in a press release. “Frichtl’s expansion in Dieterich is a shining example of this impact — bringing a state-of-the-art facility that will create jobs, strengthen the local economy, and support Illinois agriculture.”

“The State’s EDGE for Startups investment will help bolster economic growth throughout Southeastern Illinois,” said DCEO Director Kristin Richards. “Not only will this expansion project give Frichtl the space and resources they need to operate more efficiently, but it will also support the local agricultural industry while combating food insecurity throughout the region.”

The EDGE program was expanded to include startups in 2022 to spur additional investment for newer companies that are in their growth stage. In order to do this, EDGE for Startups provides a benefit that allows companies to reduce their payroll withholding instead of their Illinois corporate income tax liability. This enables startup companies without corporate income tax liabilities to maximize their incentive to reinvest into their expansion project.

“The Effingham Regional Growth Alliance commends Governor JB Pritzker and DCEO for supporting Frichtl’s Processing and Slaughtering through EDGE for Startups,”

President and CEO of Effingham Regional Growth Alliance Courtney Yockey said in the release. “This project not only assists in fostering entrepreneurship, but also combats food insecurities and addresses inadequate access to fresh foods for the Village of Dieterich. The Alliance welcomed the opportunity to work with Rachel and Zach Frichtl to bring private investment and new employment opportunities to Effingham County.”

“The Village of Dieterich is thrilled to be chosen as the location of the new Frichtl’s Processing and Slaughtering. Dieterich has been identified as a food desert, and there is currently nowhere in Dieterich to purchase fresh meats and fresh produce items,” said Village of Dieterich President Brad Hardiek. “As a growing community, we are always striving to create a better quality of life for our residents. This new grocery store and meat processing facility will be a welcome addition to Dieterich, giving our residents much needed and convenient access to healthy food. We applaud the Frichtls for investing in Dieterich and we know our community is looking forward to supporting them.”

“We’re just glad to be here and everyone making us feel like family,” Zach Frichtl said.

“As a growing community, we are always striving to create a better quality of life for our residents. This new grocery store and meat processing facility will be a welcome addition to Dieterich.”

— Brad Hardiek, Village of Dieterich president



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Airport setting EFFINGHAM on course for *growth*



Effingham County Regional Airport commissioners, along with county, city, state and federal officials and engineers, break ground on a runway extension project in September. Pictured with shovels, from left, are Airport Commissioner Ken Wohltman; Airport Manager Jerry Tate; Effingham City Commissioner Hank Stephens; Effingham County Engineer and Airport Superintendent Greg Koester; Effingham County Board Chairman and Airport Commissioner Josh Douthit; Airport Commission Chairman Tony Siemer; B.J. Murray, IDOT Section Chief Aviation & Marine Transportation Program Planning; Clayton Stambaugh, Deputy Director for Illinois Department of Aeronautics; Airport Commissioner Phil Toops; Rob Waller, Hanson Professional Services; Shane Hauman, President of McCarthy Improvement; Effingham County Board Member and Airport Commissioner Jeremy Deters. Cathy Griffith photo

Story by Cathy Griffith

On any given day, aircraft can be seen flying in and out of Effingham County Regional Airport.

Corporate aircraft drive part of that traffic, and as the airport finally undergoes long-sought-after improvements, officials hope to entice more corporate traffic and lure more business to Effingham.

The work needed to achieve that will begin this spring when contractors break ground on a runway extension project that will lengthen the runway by nearly 900 feet. The new 6,000-foot runway will include a 2,200-foot taxiway extension to increase aircraft safety and capacity.

The Rebuild Illinois Capital Improvement grant is funding 90% of the \$5 million project, with the county providing 10%.

It is not the only project slated for this year. Officials are also hoping to start construction on a new 10-bay T-hangar. The \$1.4 million project also includes some access pavements to and around the hangar. The additional pavement will open up some adjacent property for additional hangar space, especially if somebody wants to put in another corporate box hangar, according to Airport Superintendent Greg Koester.

“We’re already looking at opportunities and funding availability

for even another T-hangar in the near future, hopefully, if the need warrants it,” he said.

Even though construction hasn’t begun, Koester said the 10 bays of the new hangar are already reserved.

About half of the reserved space will be occupied by existing tenants of the airport’s 12-bay T-hangar who want improved hangar space. The current T-hangar is a pole-barn-type timber building that is 50 years old and has been having issues for quite some time. The new steel hangar will provide more space and automatic doors.

“This T-hangar construction has been long in waiting, and fortunately, we were able to identify some funding to get something like this built,” said Koester, adding a large portion will come from the state with some local, including American Rescue Plan Act funds, covering the rest.

Koester anticipates both projects to be completed by next year.

The runway extension will make room for more mid-sized business jets, which airport manager Jerry Tate said have a maximum capacity of 19 passengers.

While the airport does have some of those

types of jets flying in and out, its current runway doesn’t satisfy insurance requirements.

“They’ve been able to come and go, but they have to go in and out at reduced capacity with runway length,” he said. “They just

“That’s really what the airport is all about. More than anything else, it is bringing in new business and employment opportunities.”

— *Effingham County Regional Airport Manager Jerry Tate*

can't go off fully loaded with the runway length we have now. When we get done with the bulk of them, they should be able to. The big stickler has always been accelerate, stop distances, where an aircraft would accelerate to a certain speed, and if they have a failure, they have enough runway left to get stopped."

Tate said that's why some pilots opt to go to an airport with a longer runway. He hopes to see more business jets use the local airport when the runway extension is finished.

He also hopes to attract corporate aircraft by providing more hangar space. The airport's hangars have been full for a while, with 26 aircraft based there.

"If someone wanted to come to Effingham and base a business jet here right now, we don't have any space for them," said Tate.

Six corporate jets are based at the Effingham airport, including one owned by Heartland Dental.

"It's a big airplane compared to most of the other airplanes you see in Effingham," said Tate.

Tate also sees business jets coming and going to the airport that aren't based there.

"For instance, Sherwin-Williams comes and goes. Menards comes and goes, Hitachi Metals," he said.

The airport has seen continuous traffic growth. Tate said daily operations have increased significantly in the past 10 years, especially in corporate-type aircraft. However, he notes not all corpo-

rate aircraft are jets, but they are larger than a typical fun plane, seating six to eight.

"You don't see a whole lot of 19-seaters coming and going at Effingham, but a few. I've probably seen three different airplanes this week that could seat nearly 19," he said.

Tate estimates the Effingham airport sees as much traffic as Coles County Memorial Airport if not more. He also estimates Effingham sees nearly the same activity as Decatur, noting that Decatur has a control tower while Effingham and Mattoon don't.

"I'm out here every day. I can see on the computer what kind of activity these other airports are having as well," he said. "Compared to most of the other small airports in Southern Illinois, we're doing pretty good."

But don't expect commercial flights anytime soon.

Tate said bigger airports than Effingham have tried commercial services and failed. He said they usually end up being subsidized because there are not enough people in the area to sustain them.

Tate believes the money spent improving the airport will pay for itself in the long term. Fuel and hangar rent are the biggest income producers at the airport, and he said corporate jets burn a lot of fuel.

"That's really what the airport is all about. More than anything else, it is bringing in new business and employment opportunities," he said.

In this 2023 file photo, an aircraft marshaller directs a plane traveling down the runway at Effingham County Regional Airport during an EAA Fly-In. Nick Taylor photo.





Above, Effingham County Regional Airport Superintendent and County Engineer Greg Koester speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony for a runway extension at the airport. Below, Effingham County Regional Airport Commission Chairman Tony Siemer speaks during the same. Photos by Cathy Griffith



City of Effingham Economic Development Director Todd Hull said some businesses request information about local airports and their distances to international airports.

"If the company is going to primarily use small corporate jets, then the local airport becomes more of a site location factor," he said.

Hull added that the recent runway expansion project at the Effingham airport has helped tremendously in meeting the needs of most inquiries and considers the airport important to Effingham's economy and growth.

As time becomes an even larger factor in today's fast-moving business world, Hull said the availability of a local airport helps to meet those deadlines.

"Many companies have owners or high-ranking officials who fly to corporate facilities on a regular basis. Having the airport also allows Effingham to compete for future projects, whereby an airport is one of the site-selection criteria," he said.

Koester said the airport has become an important tool for the community in economic development.

"I think a lot of people have their eyes opened when they come visit the airport. I think a lot of people who come in and invest in the community often don't drive in; they often fly in. It's a good welcome mat, front door to the community," said Koester.

Airport officials are already planning for the next couple of years in what they call Phase 2. That includes expanding the ramp area and grading the west end of the runway to comply with federal standards.

"After that, we look to rehabilitate or resurface our north-south runway, which is our secondary runway, just to keep that pavement in compliance," said Koester.

Those plans are part of a much larger plan.

"It's about the community growing. It always has been," said Tate.

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Wright's Furniture & Flooring

Uncle and Nephew Duo Lead 5th-Generation Family-Owned Business in Central Illinois

In the United States, the amount of 5th-generation family-owned businesses has been declining, but during the last 135 years, Wright's Furniture & Flooring in Central Illinois has remained strong. Continuing the family tradition, a new duo is leading the company, with 4th generation John Wright as President leading the day-to-day operations alongside his nephew and 5th-generation, Vice President Alex Wright.

"It is truly unique that our business has been led by someone in our family for the last 135 years," said John Wright. "We wouldn't change a thing over these years. We've had such tremendous support from the community and have been able to make a difference in the homes of our customers. Alex and I work together to lead all of our locations and carry

out the vision my great-grandfather had in mind. We are so thankful for our wonderful family and customers in Central Illinois."

George W. Wright first opened the Dieterich store in 1889 and since then, the business has grown with locations in Robinson, Taylorville and Wright at Home in Effingham. John Wright said his family and the business has prioritized hiring local and being involved in the Central Illinois community over the years.

"Working with your uncle is not something everyone can say they get to do, and we find it a privilege to be able to work with family," said Alex Wright. "I've learned a lot from my uncle John and my dad, Tom Wright who was also former president of the company. Our team at Wright's is close-knit and I think that's because at the heart of the business is family."

Wright's Furniture & Flooring is a 5th-generation family-owned business that is celebrating its 136th anniversary this year. Wright's Furniture & Flooring features a large selection of quality living room, bedroom, dining room, home office, home accents, entertainment, commercial and custom furniture as well as a wide selection of flooring. The business also offers interior design services in its Dieterich, Robinson and Taylorville locations and window treatments through its Wright at Home store in Effingham.

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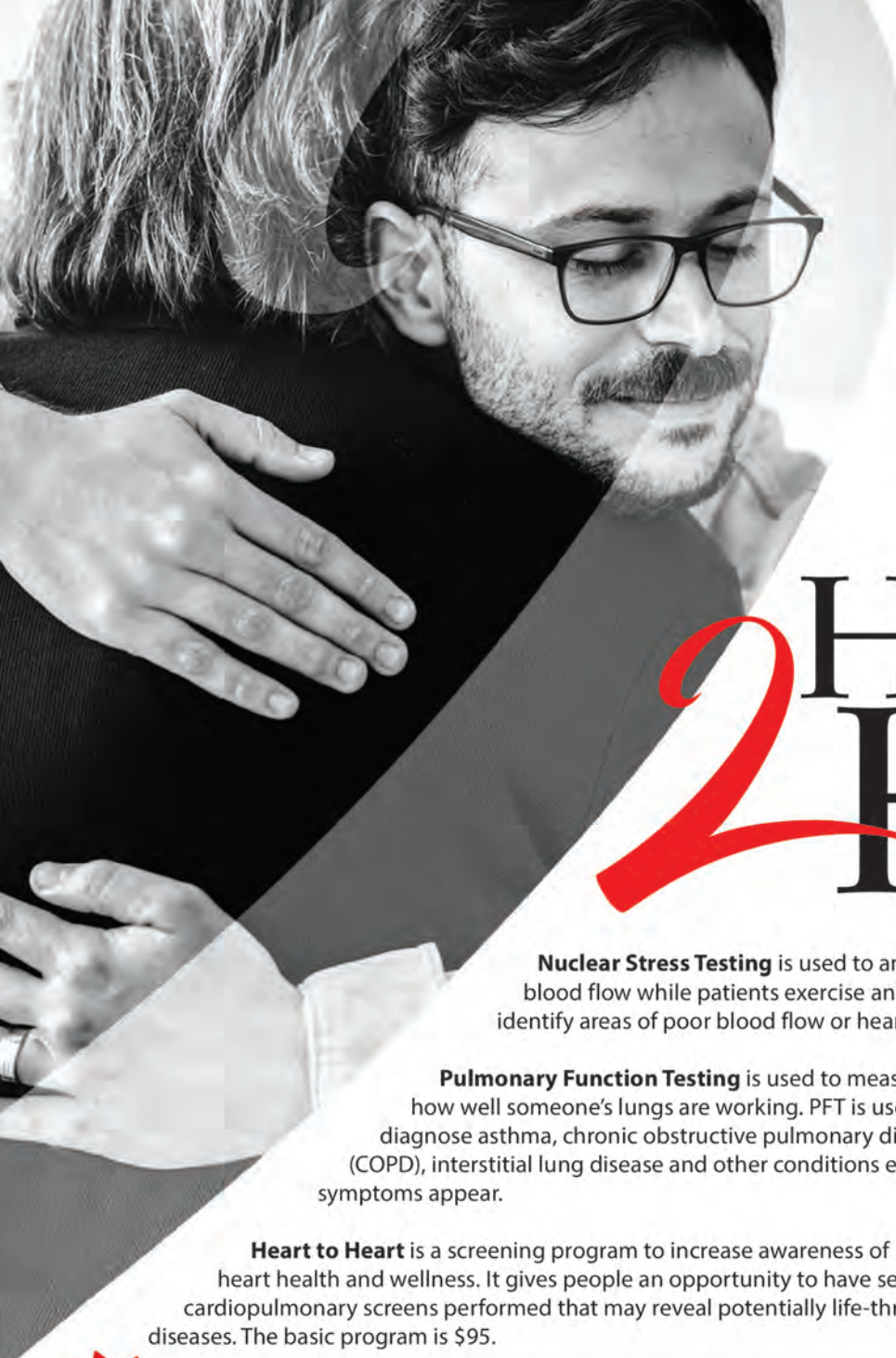
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New Chamber Members

The Effingham County Chamber welcomed new members in 2024.



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber added **Kay Pemberton Coaching & Consulting** to its list of members. Specializing in life and business coaching, Pemberton offers services designed to help individuals and organizations achieve their full potential. Pemberton provides a range of coaching services, including SYMBIS Relationship Coaching, Energy Leadership Coaching, Enneagram Coaching and Kingdom Factor Peer Groups. These programs are tailored to address personal and professional development needs. Her approach offers personalized strategies and support throughout the journey. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Dan Patton, Tonya Siner and Steve Will, Kay Pemberton and Chamber Ambassadors Layna Bond, Clint Holkenbrink and Russ Runde.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Peters Buildings Inc.**, a local construction company, as one of its newest members. Peters Buildings Inc. provides a wide range of construction services to meet the needs of both residential and commercial clients. Their skilled team is led by owner Jeremy Peters. Fully licensed, bonded and insured, Peters Buildings Inc. ensures that all projects are managed with the highest standards of professionalism and safety. From left are Chamber Ambassador Debbie Womack, Dave Zerrusen, Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall and Tonya Siner, President Jeremy Peters, Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will and Layna Bond, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown.



The Effingham County Chamber added **Crossroots Church** to its membership. Located at 3200 S Banker St. in Effingham, Crossroots Church is dedicated to fostering spiritual growth and community engagement through its diverse ministries and services. Crossroots Church offers worship gatherings every Sunday at 10 a.m., featuring programs for nursery, preschool and elementary-aged children. On Wednesdays, the church provides ministries for adults and youth, including Celebrate Recovery, a program aimed at helping individuals overcome various hurts, habits and hang-ups. In addition to regular services, Crossroots Church hosts a variety of events and small groups designed to strengthen community bonds and support personal development. The church also emphasizes the importance of serving others, offering numerous opportunities for members to volunteer and contribute to both the church and the



broader community. For more information, visit crossroots.church or follow them on Facebook at [@crossroots.church.il](https://www.facebook.com/crossroots.church.il). From left, front row, are Dawn Chapman, Patti Chapman, Kim Burton, Lead Pastor Rodney Burton, Chamber Ambassador Steve Will, Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown, Chamber Ambassadors Layna Bond and Lisa Wilson; back row, Worship & Media Pastor Ryan Chapman, Family Life Pastor Terry Chapman, Chamber Ambassador Russ Runde, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester and Chamber Ambassador Dan Capes.



◄◄ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Aligned Serenity**, a professional organizing company, as a new member. Founded in 2021, Aligned Serenity specializes in creating simplified, organized spaces that enhance clients' lives. Serving Central Illinois and beyond, the company offers both in-person and virtual sessions tailored to individual needs. Their services encompass de-cluttering and organizing various areas, including pantries, offices, closets and garages, with a focus on developing systems that promote serenity and functionality. Owner and lead organizer Landriah Hardiek has a background in psychology and understands the impact intentional living and organized spaces can have on well-being. From left are Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack and Russ Runde, Owner Landriah Hardiek, Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Dan Capes, and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown.

The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Crossroads Counseling & Consultation** in Effingham as its newest member. Owned and managed by Jonathan Kabbes, Crossroads Counseling provides comprehensive mental health care through a strengths-based approach that addresses all aspects of an individual's holistic well-being. At Crossroads Counseling, the focus is on empowering individuals through experiential interventions that encourage reflection on past experiences, fostering personal and unique growth. The practice emphasizes creating a safe, ethical and moral environment, promoting client autonomy as a cornerstone for early prevention and the ability to overcome current or future life challenges. In addition to individual counseling sessions, Crossroads Counseling offers medical-grade red light therapy as part of their holistic approach to mental health care. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Michael Wall, Jonathan Kabbes and Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde and Marty Stock. ►►





◀ ◀ **Wheat Penny Cocktail Bar** in Effingham is now a member of the Effingham County Chamber. The Wheat Penny is a speakeasy-inspired bar that offers a curated selection of signature cocktails, including unique creations like the "Bacon Me Crazy" and the "Pumpkin Pie Espresso Martini." Wheat Penny also offers private event spaces for occasions such as business meetings and bridal showers. Guests can reserve intimate private booths or larger spaces like "The Vault" to customize their experience. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Lisa Wilson, Michael Wall, Deborah Womack, Clint Holkenbrink and Jim Hecht, Owners Riley Pruemer and Michael Brummer, Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner, Dan Patton and Steve Will, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester and Chamber Ambassadors Lisa Cornell and Layna Bond.

The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **808 Enterprises**, a provider of excavation and demolition services owned by Kelby and Harley Simmons, as a new member. With over 15 years of experience, 808 Enterprises delivers tailored solutions for residential and commercial projects. It was founded in 2021 by Kelby, a heavy equipment operator with 12 years of service as a union operator. 808 Enterprises offers a comprehensive range of services including excavation, commercial site preparation, mass earthwork, demolition, land clearing, pond building, tree and brush removal and agricultural services. From left are Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown, Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will and Tonya Siner, owners Harley and Kelby Simmons and 808 employee Brodie Bennett.



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Revive with B**. Owned by Bronwyn Wolff, Revive with B offers treatments at pop-up locations, in-home visits or wherever is most convenient. They also provide bridal packages. Based in Effingham, Revive with B's IV therapy services are designed to improve hydration, boost energy, support the immune system and promote overall wellness. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Layna Bond, Steve Will and Allison Stevens; Owner Bronwyn Wolff; Chamber Ambassador Dan Capes; and Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester.



▲ ▲ **Eco-Trim 217**, a tree service company, has joined the Effingham County Chamber. Founded in 2012 by Ben Goeckner, Eco-Trim 217 specializes in enhancing the health and appearance of trees through professional tree trimming, safely removing hazardous or unwanted trees to protect properties, and providing comprehensive landscaping services. Their landscaping expertise includes bush removal and trimming, constructing retaining walls, brick work, managing rocks and rock removal, creating water features and small ponds, and applying mulch to beautify outdoor spaces. Additionally, Eco-Trim 217 supplies firewood for residential use. Serving multiple locations, including Effingham, Champaign-Urbana, Joliet, Casey and the St. Louis area, Eco-Trim 217 is dedicated to enhancing outdoor spaces with eco-friendly solutions. From left are Isabella Munoz, Vayda Munoz, Trae Hall, Riley Nation, Kristin Munoz and owner Ben Goeckner.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Brandy Kelley Counseling PLLC** as a new member. With a mixture of strengths-based approach and relational therapy, Brandy Kelley, a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, supports individuals through life's challenges, offering evidence-based methods such as EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) for trauma, loss or anxiety. Her practice focuses on empowering clients to build resilience, balance and well-being. Brandy Kelley Counseling provides individual therapy for adults in or around Effingham or virtually for those residing in Illinois, Indiana or Michigan. The services offered include support for perinatal mental health, addressing the emotional complexities of pregnancy and motherhood; trauma therapy using EMDR; anxiety management strategies; and guidance for women navigating societal pressures, relationships and self-discovery. From left, front row, are Chamber Ambassadors Deborah Womack and Lisa Cornell, Brandy Kelley and Chamber Ambassador Steve Will; back row, Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde, Michael Wall and Clint Holkenbrink.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed Hazel Jayne as a new member. **Hazel Jayne Crystals & Gifts** store in Effingham was founded in 2018 by Teutopolis native Allison Linley. With a background in social work, Linley opened the shop with the vision of fostering positivity and mindfulness among residents. In addition to offering crystals and curated gifts, the store has been instrumental in organizing mystical street markets that have drawn large crowds. One such event, the Fairy Street Market, is scheduled for June 8. From left, back row, are Chamber Ambassadors Jim Hecht, Dan Capes, Steve Will, Randy Jones, and Lisa Cornell; front row, Chamber Ambassadors Marty Stock and Jerry Jansen, Former Chamber President & CEO Lucinda Hart, Owner Allison Linley, and Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack, Tonya Siner, Michael Wall, Layna Bond and Dan Patton.

►►

The Effingham County Chamber welcomed new member **Resin**, an automated recycling station dedicated to rewarding individuals for their sorted cans and bottles. Leveraging their backgrounds in automation and computer vision, co-founders Kelly Koskelin and Cassandra Rommel have developed a user-friendly system that not only counts recyclables but also provides personalized feedback on items that cannot be recycled. To get started, individuals can sign up for an account at app.raisewithresin.com using just an email address. Once registered, they can bring their sorted aluminum cans and clear plastic bottles (Type 1, PET) to Resin's location at 305 E. Fayette Ave. in Effingham, located next to the Gabby Goat. At the station, users can scan a QR code to unlock a drawer and deposit their recyclables. Payments for the recycled items are processed through Resin's mobile website, allowing users to receive their earnings via PayPal or Venmo. The Resin Station offers a way for



groups to fundraise while promoting recycling and reducing litter. The platform provides tools within their app to generate flyers and social media posts. From left, back row, are Bill and Bev Elving, Chamber Ambassadors Dan Capes and Michael Wall; front row, Chamber Ambassador Dan Patton, City of Effingham Economic Development Specialist Sasha Althoff, Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Layna Bond, Founder and CEO Kelly Koskelin, Co-Founder Cassandra Rommel, Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack, Randy Jones and Steve Will, and Chamber Board Chair Elect Jay Buehnerkemper.



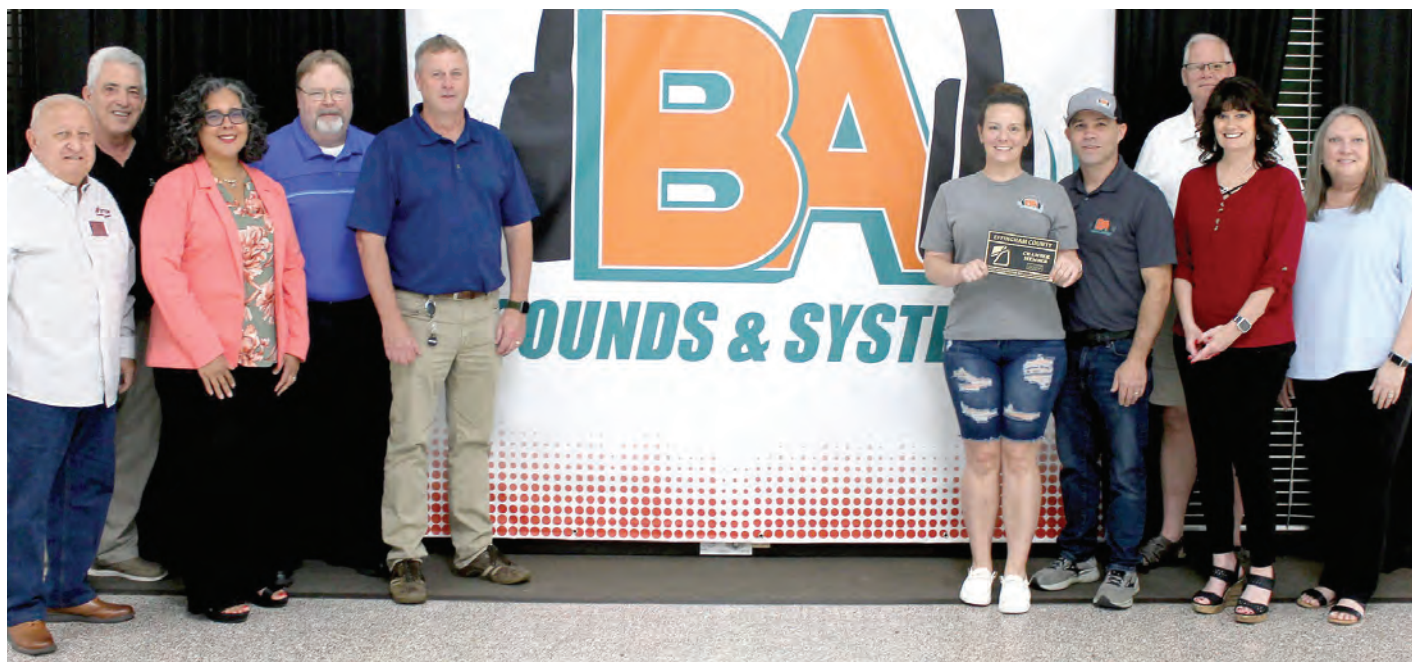
▲▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed new member **Poo-Wee Pooper Scoopers**, a family-owned business by Jane Graves that provides professional pet waste removal services. Poo-Wee Pooper Scoopers serves a broad area, including Richland, Effingham, Jasper, Crawford, Lawrence and Wabash counties in Illinois and Knox County in Indiana. They offer a range of services tailored to both residential and commercial needs, including weekly cleanings, one-time cleanings and specialized commercial cleanings. Each visit includes the removal of pet waste, with all tools sanitized between yards to ensure the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene. Poo-Wee Pooper Scoopers also provides free treats and belly rubs for dogs. Customers can get hassle-free scheduling with no contracts. From left, front row, are Chamber Chair Elect Jay Buehnerkemper, Director of Membership Becky Brown, owner Jane Graves and Chamber Ambassadors Layna Bond and Russ Runde; center row, Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall, Steve Will and Jeff Muhlbachler; back row, Former Interim Chamber President & CEO Jeff Fritchtnitch and Chamber Ambassador Randy Jones.



▲▲ The Effingham County Chamber announces the addition of **Cardinal Golf Course** to its network of local businesses. Located in Effingham, Cardinal Golf Course offers an 18-hole public course bordering Lake Sara. Established in 1967, the course features 5,899 yards of golf from the longest tees for a par of 72. Amenities include a driving range, putting green and an onsite clubhouse. Open from March 1 to Oct. 31, Cardinal Golf Course welcomes both seasoned golfers and newcomers. In September, the Chamber hosted its first Fall Golf Outing at Cardinal Golf Course, attracting a sold-out group of participants. Cardinal Golf Course also hosts various tournaments and events throughout the season. From left are Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassador Steve Will, General Manager Chloe Meek and Chamber Ambassador Jeff Muhlbachler.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Buffalo Wild Wings** as a new member. Located in Effingham, Buffalo Wild Wings offers a lively atmosphere for fans to enjoy wings, beer and sports viewing. Known for its signature wings with a variety of bold sauces and seasonings, Buffalo Wild Wings provides a full menu that includes burgers, wraps, salads and appetizers. Buffalo Wild Wings recently hosted the Chamber's October Networking Luncheon, where local business professionals gathered for food, networking and collaboration. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Lisa Cornell, Allison Stevens and Randy Jones, District Manager Tim Sieg, General Manager Abby Cougill, Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall and Dan Patton, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester and Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde and Jeff Mhlbachler.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed new member **BA Sounds & Systems** in Effingham. BA Sounds & Systems was established in June 2023. By December of the same year, Brent and Abigail Boehm unveiled a state-of-the-art arcade at the Village Square Mall. The store, owned and managed by the Boehms, offers a range of services including commercial sound, light, LED video wall and livestream installations. Additionally, they provide speaker and light rentals for DJs and private events. From left, front row, are Chamber Ambassador Dan Patton, Former Chamber President & CEO Lucinda Hart, Chamber Ambassador Steve Will, Owners Abigail and Brent Boehm, and Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Debbie Womack; back row, Chamber Ambassadors Jim Hecht, Dan Capes and Randy Jones.



▲ ▲ **Jeanine Heuerman**, a licensed **Shelter Insurance** agent, has become part of the Effingham County Chamber. Operating from her office in Effingham, Heuerman provides a full range of insurance services, including auto, home and life insurance, to clients in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio and Tennessee. With a focus on personalized service, Heuerman works closely with her clients to offer tailored insurance solutions that meet their individual needs. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall, Tonya Siner and Jim Hecht; Jeanine Heuerman; Chamber Ambassadors Deborah Womack, Lisa Cornell, Steve Will and Dan Patton; Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester; and Chamber Ambassador Lisa Wilson.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Senior Financial Solutions (SFS)** to its roster of members. With over 55 years of industry experience, Senior Financial Solutions offers a wide range of services, including life insurance, Medicare supplements, long-term care, 401(k) rollovers, annuities and more. John Nuelle and Jared Travis, the leading figures at SFS, have consistently qualified for the Million Dollar Round Table, placing them among the top 1% of agents nationwide. Their commitment to service and integrity continues the traditions started by Travis' grandfather in 1965. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde, Layna Bond and Tonya Siner; Principle John Nuelle; President Jared Travis; Office Manager Brittany Barnes; and Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack and Michael Wall.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed new member **Sidwell Consulting**. Founded by Jami Sidwell in January of 2024, Sidwell Consulting specializes in enhancing efficiency, effectiveness and overall performance. Sidwell Consulting offers a comprehensive range of services tailored to meet the diverse needs of organizations — from strategic planning to employee engagement, leadership development to organizational development, change management to performance management, and cultural transformations. From left are Chamber Ambassador Jerry Jansen, Former Chamber President & CEO Lucinda Hart, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall, Owner Jami Sidwell, and Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will and Tonya Siner.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Sen. Steve McClure** as a new member representing the 54th Senate District. "Effingham is a wonderful city full of amazing people who care. I am honored to represent Effingham County as your Senator, and I am very grateful that we were able to open an office in Effingham so that my team and I can work closely with the community and be available for those who need us," said McClure. McClure's constituent services staff is now available to assist residents in navigating various state agencies and departments. Their services include unemployment claims, state grant application assistance, voter registration, FOID and concealed carry delays, seniors services, state funding opportunities, state taxes, state licensing, aid agency referrals, internships, commemoration and recognitions and Medicaid. Residents may sign up for McClure's e-newsletter at www.SenatorMcClure.com/ENews to stay updated on important announcements, legislative updates and community news. From left are Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall; Former Chamber President & CEO Lucinda Hart; Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde, Randy Jones and Steve Will; McClure; District Director Matthew Kuhns; Chamber Ambassadors Lisa Cornell, Tonya Siner and Dan Capes; and Chamber Board Chair Dr. Austin Cheney.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Irwin Seating Company** to its membership. Irwin Seating Company, a fourth-generation family-owned business, manufactures audience seating for theaters, auditoriums, arenas and beyond. Beyond their seating solutions, Irwin Seating Company is dedicated to exploring new opportunities and enriching the communities they serve. Irwin runs two manufacturing facilities in North America, including one in Altamont, Illinois. Employing over 500 individuals, Irwin Seating Company supports local employment and suppliers, ensuring economic sustainability in the regions they operate. From left, front row, are Chamber Ambassador Dan Patton, Marcus Lindsay, Jim Ingram, Vice President of Q2C Business Execution Michael Brown, Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will and Tonya Siner and Ashley Bailey; back row, Jimmy Caraway, Zach Townsend, Plant Manager Damon Duckworth, Zach Letizia, Director of Human Resources Laura Stewart, Director of Order Management Anna Goldstein, and Chamber Ambassadors Randy Jones and Russ Runde.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed new member **Dill's Pro-Wash**, which specializes in exterior cleaning services including pressure washing, window cleaning, gutter cleaning and soft-wash roof cleaning. Founded by Nick Dill, Dill's Pro-Wash began as a venture through the Effingham County CEO Program, and has evolved into a full-time business, serving residential and commercial customers. In addition to its exterior cleaning services, Dill's Pro-Wash offers Dill's Illumination, a full-service Christmas lighting solution for homes and businesses. From left are Former Chamber President & CEO Lucinda Hart, Chamber Ambassador Jerry Jansen, Nick Dill, and Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Steve Will.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Dot Behrns**, a Certified Health Lifestyle Coach, as a new member. She has expertise in guiding individuals toward healthier habits for both mind and body. Specializing in disease prevention, including cancer, heart disease and diabetes, Behrns offers personalized one-on-one coaching sessions designed to empower individuals to take control of their health journey. Her approach combines evidence-based strategies with compassionate support. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall and Dan Patton, Dot Behrns and Chamber Ambassadors Layna Bond and Russ Runde.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed the **City of Altamont** as a new member. The City of Altamont serves 2,300 residents, offering electric, water and sewer utilities, which extend beyond the city limits. Altamont has three banks, five food establishments, two car dealerships, three automotive repair businesses, two convenience stores, hardware stores and a grocery store. The forthcoming marketing of a new residential subdivision signals the city's commitment to growth and prosperity, providing further opportunities for residents and businesses. "We look forward

to collaborating with Mayor Dan Milleville, City Clerk Sarah Stephen, Deputy Clerk Ellie Buennemeyer, Zoning Administrator Gary White and the entire Altamont team to continue enhancing the economic landscape and quality of life in our region," said Former Chamber President & CEO Lucinda Hart. From left are Chamber Ambassador Russ Runde, Hart, Chamber Ambassadors Dan Capes and Tonya Siner, Mayor Dan Milleville, City Clerk Sarah Stephen, Deputy Clerk Ellie Buennemeyer, Zoning Administrator Gary White and Chamber Ambassador Randy Jones.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Potted Charm**, a locally owned garden and floral design business, as one of its newest members. Potted Charm is known for its artfully crafted plant arrangements, unique floral designs and seasonal offerings.

From left are Chamber Ambassadors Dan Patton and Tonya Siner, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Owner Meagan Zerrusen and Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack, Randy Jones, Clint Holkenbrink and Russ Runde.



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber adds **Soothe Studios Float Spa & Sauna** to its network of local businesses. Located in Effingham, Soothe Studios offers a range of wellness services designed to promote relaxation and holistic health. Soothe Studios provides float therapy, infrared sauna sessions and an oxygen bar, all aimed at enhancing physical and mental well-being. Owner and operator Jesse Patnaude emphasizes the importance of creating a therapeutic environment free from disruption and distraction, where clients can calm the mind, relax the body, and soothe the spirit. Soothe Studios provides personalized services tailored to individual needs. In addition to their wellness services, Soothe Studios offers membership options and e-gift cards. The studio also hosts events and workshops focused on health and wellness. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will, Layna Bond and Clint Holkenbrink, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassador Lisa Cornell, owners Jesse and Jeremy Patnaude, and Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall and Tonya Siner.

The Maroon Spoon in Dieterich has joined the Effingham County Chamber. The ice cream and dessert shop is locally owned and operated by Jeff and Julia Schuppert. The Maroon Spoon offers a variety of ice cream flavors and desserts in an historic building. "We're excited to welcome The Maroon Spoon to the Chamber and celebrate its role in bringing joy and delicious desserts to Dieterich and the surrounding areas," said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. From left are Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall and Steve Will, Julia and Jeff Schuppert, and Chamber Ambassadors Randy Jones and Russ Runde.

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▲ ▲ Effingham County Chamber announced **Mathy Heating & Air Conditioning Inc.** as a new member. Mathy Heating & Air Conditioning Inc., a family-owned and operated enterprise, has served Effingham and its neighboring areas, specializing in the installation, maintenance and repair of heating and cooling systems. With over three decades of industry experience, Mathy Heating & Air offers comprehensive solutions for HVAC needs, encompassing the installation and servicing of furnaces and mini-split units, as well as heat pumps, boilers and air conditioners. Mathy also offers fireplace services and provides equipment to enhance indoor air

quality. "Mathy's commitment to exceptional service and dedication to customer satisfaction resonate deeply with our Chamber's values. We eagerly anticipate collaborating with them to support their efforts in delivering top-tier HVAC solutions to our community," said Former Chamber President & CEO Lucinda Hart. From left, back row, are Alex Willenborg, Keenin Willshire, Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will, Jerry Jansen, Debbie Womack, Randy Jones, Lisa Cornell and Marty Stock; front row, Hart, Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall and Jim Hecht, owners Sarah and Adam Pike, Carl Portz, and Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Dan Patton.

► ► The Effingham County Chamber welcomed Effingham **Sunrise Rotary** as a new member. Sunrise Rotary provides a platform for local professionals to engage in service projects, foster ethical standards, and build goodwill both locally and internationally. Founded in June 1994, Effingham Sunrise Rotary meets weekly to provide informative and inspiring presentations, allowing members to connect and collaborate on initiatives that address both community and global needs. Their efforts include a variety of impactful service projects, from coordinating local blood drives and supporting the Meals on Wheels program to international initiatives such as the Tijuana Women's Shelter and Neema Village in Tanzania. Sunrise Rotary also hosts several annual events, including the Halloween Parade, Rotary Week and the Lucky Draw Raffle. Rotary members follow the guiding principles of "Service Above Self" and the "Four-Way Test," which focus on truth, fairness, goodwill and mutual



benefit. These values are at the heart of the organization's mission to unite community leaders who are passionate about creating positive change. For more information about Effingham Sunrise Rotary, visit EffinghamSunrise.org or follow them on Facebook at Effingham Illinois Sunrise Rotary. From left are Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall, Steve Will and Tonya Siner, Sunrise Rotary President Jay Wallace, Rotary Secretary Josh Mathis, Chamber Membership Director & Sunrise Rotary Membership Chairman Becky Brown and Rotary Treasurer Nathan Earnest.



The Effingham County Chamber welcomes Effingham County **ROSC (Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care)**

as a new member. ROSC is a not-for-profit organization offering a coordinated network of community-based services that are person-centered, focusing on recovery, improved health, wellness and the overall quality of life for individuals with or at risk of substance use and co-occurring conditions. The organization's comprehensive approach ensures that every individual receives tailored support, empowering them to achieve their full potential and lead fulfilling lives. The Effingham County ROSC office is located at 104 Blohm Avenue in Effingham at the Health Department. For more information about Effingham County ROSC and their services visit HourHouseRecovery.org, Facebook @Effingham County ROSC or call/text 217-663-0823. From left, front row, are Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, ROSC Coordinator Samantha Hicks, ROSC CPRS/Recovery



Navigator Felicia Depoister, Hour House Prevention Specialist Olivia Jenkins, Gateway Foundation Warm Hand Off Program Kat O'Brien, Person with Lived Experience Brandy Schlanser; back row, Gateway Foundation Carrie McKenzie, Effingham County Case Management Kelly Buscher, Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall and Clint Holkenbrink, ECHD Family Connections Beth Wise, Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Lisa Cornell, CEFS CIPT Mobility Manager Nathan Nichols, Chamber Ambassador Deborah Womack, Family Life Center Parent Coordinator Becky Rhodes, and Chamber Ambassadors Dan Patton and Steve Will.



▲ ▲ **Federated Auto Parts/Fisher Auto Parts** has joined the Effingham County Chamber. Established in 1929, Fisher Auto Parts has grown to include approximately 500 company-owned stores and over 100 independent jobbers across 18 states, serving professional technicians and automotive enthusiasts with parts and service. As a member of Federated Auto Parts and the Automotive Parts Services Group (APSG), Fisher Auto Parts provides delivery and products from brands like Dayco, Moog, ACDelco and Wagner. Fisher Auto Parts also emphasizes creating growth opportunities for employees. From left,

front row, are Delivery Driver Monica Row, Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Steve Will, Store Manager Billy Wilke, Delivery Driver Brenda Phillips, Counter Salesman Trevor Merrill, and Chamber Ambassador Marty Stock; back row, Overnight Driver Keith Wilson, Assistant Manager/Counter Sales Mary Allen, Overnight Driver David Wilson, Delivery Driver John Thilker, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassador Randy Jones and Overnight Driver Thomas Oleson.



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Sat March 8th.....10a-8p

Sun March 9th.....11a-4p

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Announcing our new Senior Attorney, Paige N. Fox

Paige N. Fox is the Immediate Past President of the Illinois Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA). Before joining DCEL, Paige founded Fox Law, LLC dba Fox Elder Law & Estate Planning, LLC, a fully remote law firm in Illinois, and assisted DCEL on an of counsel basis. She brings compassion and expertise to her practice, assisting clients with estate planning, special needs planning, asset preservation, Medicaid planning, and other matters affecting seniors and individuals with disabilities. Paige also serves as Chair of the Chicago Bar Association Young Lawyers Section Serving Our Seniors Committee. She embodies a commitment to professional development and community service.

Paige has been deemed a Rising Star by Super Lawyers (2022 through current), an honor earned by only 2.5% of the top attorneys in Illinois under 40 years old or who have been practicing for 10 years or less. In June 2023, she was awarded the David C. Hilliard Award by the Chicago Bar Association Young Lawyers Section, in recognition of her outstanding service as Chair of the Serving Our Seniors committee.



Paige N Fox
Licensed in IL



Crystal Post
Licensed in IL and MO

Paige graduated from the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana in 2012 and earned her JD with a Certificate in Public Interest Law from Chicago-Kent College of Law in 2015. Paige is also a certified Zumba and WERQ instructor. She enjoys pro bono work, flying trapeze, sports, dancing and board games.

Announcing our new Junior Associate Attorney, Crystal Post

Crystal Post brings to DCEL her diverse legal background and a passion for empowering her clients, with a unique blend of skills and experiences. Crystal graduated from University of Illinois Chicago School of Law in 2022, following her Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from DePaul University in 2018.

Crystal's legal career is marked by a commitment to a broad range of practice areas, including estate planning. She maintains a strong commitment to community service, regularly engaging in volunteer work and pro bono legal services. Outside of her legal pursuits, Crystal enjoys reading, playing piano and spending time with her pet ferrets.

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Effingham Computer Sales & Service

Effingham Computer Sales and Service started out on a small table in Wayne Moran's garage, helping family and friends as a side gig while he worked a full time job at Premier Broadcasting (WXEF & WKJT).

In 2016, his part-time side job had quickly become much more, and working both jobs was like juggling cats. Wayne decided to make the leap and go out on his own.

In 2018, Wayne and his wife Neeley bought a new home on the south side of Effingham, and expanded the business with a larger shop.

In 2020, Wayne and his family decided it was time to get the business out of the house, and began the search for a retail location. After looking at many, many locations around Effingham, Wayne decided to keep the business on the south side of Effingham and moved into the Village Square Mall in 2021.

In July of 2023, Wayne and Neeley purchased a building for the business at 1906 South Banker in Effingham. The location had started life as an ice cream stand in 2000. The building is unique, with a round design, and multiple windows facing South Banker street.

Their new location has been good for business. While Effingham Computer did well inside the mall, Wayne and Neeley knew their new building would bring them significantly more traffic, with more than 15,000 cars traveling South Route 45 on a monthly basis.

In January 2024, Effingham Computer became an official UPS Access Point. This service allows customers to drop off and pick up UPS packages and has become a very popular addition to the south end of Effingham.

Wayne says his business is "all about local service and support",

and isn't the typical "computer shop." We're a computer store with a shop right up front, not hidden in a "tech room." I'm really proud of that. I want to be able to talk with customers while we work on stuff in front of them. We're not going to talk down to you or over your head; we're here to help people, that's the goal."

"We offer low, flat rates, and we do free estimates on everything. I don't believe in "bench fees", or fleecing you with an "annual maintenance" plan. I'd rather have customers for years than make a bunch of money and never see you again. When it comes to new systems, we don't do the \$100+ markup most places do. We know you can hop on Amazon and have something here in a few days, but it won't have local service or support. We carry a great selection of laptops from Dell, Lenovo, HP, Asus, and others. For desktops, we like to build

from scratch. I'm proud to say we built 148 desktops last year, 132 in 2023, and more than 500 in the last 5 years. Plus, we did over 200 new laptops in each of the last two years. We do everything from regular home systems to a lot of gaming stuff. Most of all, we focus on quality, upgradable systems, and include free setup and data migration on every new or used system."

Effingham Computer carries a full line of laptops and desktops, along with many parts including processors, motherboards, memory, storage, cases, power supplies, and much, much more.

Effingham Computer's hours are Monday-Friday 10 am – 6 pm and 10 am – 2 pm on Saturday, with service calls available from 7 am daily. You can also call or text Wayne at (217) 690-9718 or email wayne@effinghamcomputer.com

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Vision 2030 plan details education leaders' priorities

Future-focused learning, shared accountability and predictable funding

Education leaders from five statewide organizations in Illinois announced Vision 2030, a blueprint for public education in Illinois, developed with input from the statewide membership of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), Illinois Principals Association (IPA), Illinois Association of

School Business Officials (Illinois ASBO) and Illinois Association of Regional School Superintendents (IARSS).

Vision 2030 seeks to engage parents, educators, policy leaders, elected officials, and the general public around a platform that emphasizes student and school safety, attracts and retains high-quality educators, enhances post-secondary success and more

effectively measures what is working well in schools in a timely, usable manner.

The Vision 2030 Policy Framework is organized into three pillars: Future-Focused Learning, Shared Accountability, and Predictable Funding.

In the public release of the plan at the organization's Joint Annual Conference held in Chicago in November, the leaders of the five organizations stated, "We have to acknowledge that students learn best, and educators teach most effectively, when they feel safe and connected to one another and to their communities. This is the single most important thing we can do to support both academic achievement and individual well-being — and it is something that has to be considered in our instructional approach, curriculum, student support services, facilities and finances to ensure that local districts have the resources needed to ensure their school buildings are safe."

Vision 2030 outlines specific policy, legislative and fiscal goals to fulfill the promise of public education in Illinois, including:

Shopping & Fun for the Whole Family

- Rural King
- Dunham's Sports
- C&C Kettle Corn
- Claire's
- Pro Nails
- Marshalls
- Impact Life
- JoAnn Fabrics
- Glik's
- Elevate
- Shoe Dept.
- Alamo Steakhouse

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Future-Focused Learning

“Future-focused learning is about reshaping our schools and classrooms and redefining student success to reflect and prepare students for all the different ways that the world and economy continue to change,” said Brent Clark, executive director, IASA. This includes:

- Engaging students in thinking about their pathways to college and career as early as elementary school. Vision 2030 calls for expanded partnerships with community colleges and universities to offer more advanced placement and dual enrollment courses for high school students, as well as working with local businesses to introduce students to in-demand and emerging career fields—including the trades, agriculture and health care, as well as AI, quantum computing, electric vehicles, advanced manufacturing and the green economy.
- Preserving time and financial resources for local curriculum innovation and programming to meet the needs of students and communities. To do this, Vision 2030 spotlights the need to closely look at the impact and cost of implementing additional required curriculum and graduation requirements and operational mandates. We must thoughtfully determine what is essential statewide vs. what local educators and school boards should be able to opt-in or -out of based on what is best for their students and communities.
- Developing new approaches to attract and retain excellent educators who have subject-matter expertise, compassion, cultural competency and commitment to help all students meet their potential. This goal is aligned with the Illinois State Board of Education’s strategic plan and specifically calls for innovative, evidence-based professional development opportunities for teachers at every level.

Shared Accountability

“Just like children’s physical growth, academic progress does not always happen in a linear manner – both growth and proficiency should be measured over time within and across grade levels,” said Jason E. Leahy, executive director, IPA. Vision 2030 advocates for:

- Thinking beyond annual standardized tests to more effectively measure student success by considering both growth and proficiency over time. This means providing classroom teachers with near real-time assessment data, so teaching strategies and academic interventions can be implemented in a timely manner.
- Establishing school ratings based on clear performance thresholds. Rather than focus-

ing on which schools make it into the top 10%, Vision 2030 prioritizes getting more schools to perform at or above grade-level, and publicly recognizing all schools that demonstrate high levels of student achievement at or above grade-level.

Predictable Funding

“School districts need the flexibility to determine how to allocate public monies to best meet the needs of their students and communities,” said Kristopher Monn, executive director, IASBO.

Achieving the goals outlined in Vision 2030 requires long-term sustainable funding with additional investment to support updated instructional resources and technology, keep pace with economic pressures on salaries and equipment, and maintain aging infrastructure. For example:

- Ensuring that the state continues to meet its promise of allocating a minimum of \$350 million in annual Evidence-Based Funding to districts.
- Allowing critical investments in health and life safety projects to be exempt from limitation by property tax caps or ISBE approval. Rather, Vision 2030 suggests that we should reconsider the current levy structure to allow schools to address urgent needs, such as installing secure

classroom doors, without impacting educational funding.

“Vision 2030 seeks to put systems and processes in place that support all school districts throughout the state in sharing what works for our kids and our communities, while also preserving local flexibility and leadership so that the best decisions are made closest to home,” said Kimberly A. Small, executive director, IASB.

“This plan will require conversation, collaboration and action between the education community, our locally elected school boards, the State Legislature, the Governor and the Illinois State Board of Education,” said Gary Tipsord, executive director, IARSS. “The skills and career demands of the future are changing, which is why we must prioritize future-focused learning and meet this moment with smart strategies around funding and accountability.”

This is the second time that these groups have collaborated on such a plan. The first initiative, Vision 2020, resulted in numerous achievements that sparked legislative action on school funding through the passage of the Evidence-Based Funding Formula in 2017, as well as important enhancements to teacher recruitment policies, college and career readiness initiatives, and the state’s accountability model.

ABOUT VISION 2030

Vision 2030 was developed through a statewide engagement effort that included input from more than 1,000 stakeholders statewide, as well as discussions with local educators who work tirelessly inside and outside of school buildings to improve the outcomes for children from all backgrounds across Illinois.



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Focus on the Future.

Effingham's 2050 Comprehensive Plan

Story and photos by Marie Adamick

A steering committee has been meeting since November to discuss Effingham's 2050 Comprehensive Plan, which outlines the city's vision, goals and policies for its long-term planning and development.

Those appointed to be on the Steering Committee by Effingham Mayor Mike Schutzbach will use it for decision making by identifying challenges, providing solutions and establishing a process for growth. It includes various topics, including land use, economic development and open spaces such as parks and recreation centers.

Stephanie Brown, urban planner for Chastain & Associates LLC, and Jake Seid, founding principal for Sightline Planning and Zoning, submitted a plan to the city in 2024.

"The whole idea of this is to strive to be the best community that Effingham can be regardless of if you live there or not," said Brown. "The survey is a great first step to ensuring we get that input."

The first meeting, on Nov. 14, began with introductions from the appointed officials. They make up the Steering Committee and are the following community members:

- Brian Hayes, president of Effingham Rumpke
- Jeff Speer, Realtor and property manager and developer with RE/MAX
- Jeff Althoff, Effingham Park District executive director
- Andy Johnson, Effingham Unit 40 schools superintendent

- Katie Koester, Effingham County Chamber president and CEO
- Mel Stock, Midland States Bank market president
- Greg Sapp, Premier Broadcasting station manager
- Bob Lakin, retired Walmart manager
- Libby Moeller, Effingham city commissioner
- Ruben Boyajian, HSHS Medical Group surgeon
- Andrew Grunloh, vice president of Grunloh Building
- Sara Ruholl, The Beanstalk Boutique owner
- David Bukelich, Flex-N-Gate human resources manager
- Kim Jansen, Effingham Performance Center executive director
- Carrie Rodman, Zoning Board of Appeals member and general manager at Tuscan Hills Winery

The data presented from 488 completed surveys included topics such as the top quality of life changes to improve Effingham, housing needs and reasons people live in Effingham.

The top suggestion to improve the quality of life in Effingham was to decrease taxes and fees. The biggest housing need was single-family housing, and the No. 1 one reason people live in Effingham is that it's close to family and friends.

The committee split into two groups to brainstorm pros and cons of housing, as well as mobility and transportation.

"The big thing that we need to be conscious of is ensuring that the community has a sense of ownership of the plan," said Seid. "We can get at that goal by reaching out to a diverse array of residents and

Team members from different emergency services met on Dec. 9 in Effingham City Hall for the focus group related to Effingham's 2050 Comprehensive Plan.





Bob Lakin, retired Walmart manager, discusses his thoughts on how to improve the City of Effingham, while Carrie Rodman, Zoning Board of Appeals member and general manager at Tuscan Hills Winery, listens during the 2050 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meeting Nov. 14 at City Hall.

by making sure that they see themselves in this plan. The city hasn't gone through this process in several years, but the consultant team has a deep well of recent experience that will help guide the process through any challenges that may arise."

Focus on emergency services

A focus group for emergency services on Dec. 9 packed the Effingham City Council chambers with police officers, firefighters, the dive team and more emergency response team members. A lengthy discussion ensued about the various services and challenges each emergency service has.

"This planning process that we're going through, both for emergency services and then the other components of the city as well, is really essential to planning for the next several years for our city," said Deputy City Administrator Dennis Presley.

The biggest need for emergency services is more people, specifically in the police department. The police need non-sworn officers to help organize, manage and regulate data and technology. The department currently has six automatic license plate readers to look for things like stolen vehicles, violent felons and missing people.

They also have body camera footage they to help manage whenever a police officer is acting in his or her "official capacity as a police officer," according to Effingham Police Chief Jason McFarland.

According to the Comprehensive Plan survey results, roughly 60% of people believe the city should be spending the same amount of money on the police department. Twenty-three percent of residents believe the city should spend more.

The Effingham Fire Department communicated their needs and future goals at the meeting, as well. These include a third fire station on the north side of the city, a new training facility, replacement plans for new apparatus and equipment (like radios and extrication tools), upgrades/expansion to Station 1, new services (like EMS coverage

and a hazmat team) and more staffing.

Survey results show that roughly 70% of both residents and non residents want to spend the same amount of money on the fire department. Twenty-one percent of residents and 22% of non residents want to spend more money on the fire department.

"These ideas will be massaged into goals, objectives and action steps to be brought before the Steering Committee for further review," said Chastain & Associates LLC urban planner Stephanie Brown. "The focus group will also be sent drafts of these goals to be reviewed and commented upon prior to being reviewed by the council and eventually adopted by the council in the final Comprehensive Plan update."

"There's always room for improvement, and that's what we're looking to do," said Miller.

Infrastructure goals

The City of Effingham has several goals for improving its infrastructure, including expanding public transportation, improving road quality and constructing roundabouts.

The transportation focus group for Effingham's 2050 Comprehensive Plan saw representation from the airport, bus system, and more. The thorough discussion included strong long-term goals and detailed visions for the city's infrastructure.

The Comprehensive Plan survey saw the same number of respondents believing the amount of parking is both fine as-is and wanting more of it, like off-street parking and the construction of parking garages. It also showed people wanting the city to prioritize maintaining existing roadways and expanding or improving public transportation.

"We need a bus with a set schedule and bus stops," said one survey respondent. "Mainly one that goes from south of town to north of town. The one now is OK, but you need to schedule pick up times

and if you forget even once, you're screwed."

"I'm hoping that we can increase services like we talked about and just be able to provide a good, quality service for Effingham County, especially, but all of our other counties, also," said Operations Manager for Central Illinois Public Transit (CIPT) and Effingham County Public Transit (ECPT) John Althoff said during the transportation focus group.

Another survey respondent also talked about infrastructure flow.

"Multiple routes in and around town, access to the interstates and traffic lights have improved the flow. Amtrak and airport improvements are an added strength," they said. "An area to improve is safe mobility downtown and Keller Drive shopping areas for pedestrians, especially with a growing senior citizen population."

Some of the goals discussed at the focus group meeting included those in a packet provided during the meeting: "Transportation & Mobility Draft Goals." Some of those included providing public transportation services that meet the needs of the community, along with considering improvements and expansion to the current transportation system to alleviate congestion or create more efficient travel.

Also discussed were the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) five-year city projects, which are:

- Patching of US 45 from Fayette Avenue south to Jaycee Avenue – April 2025 bid letting
- Patching of IL 32/33 from West Evergreen Avenue south to Jefferson Avenue – June 2025 bid letting

- Repairs to the structure carrying Banker Street (US 45) over the CSX Railroad south of US 40 – January 2025 bid letting
- Safety shoulders along US 45 from north of Rickelman to the Shelby County line – April 2025 bid letting

- Reconstruction of US 45 (Fayette Avenue) from Banker Street east to Salt Creek – June 2025 bid letting
- Resurfacing of IL 32/33 from Evergreen Avenue north to Ford Avenue – January 2026 bid letting
- Replacement of the structure carrying IL 32/33 over I-57/70 – November 2026 bid letting

There was also discussion of installing roundabouts throughout the city, like near Lake Sara and Moccasin Road and Fourth Street and Rickelman. Although some people dislike

roundabouts, Director of Public Works Jeremy Heuerman believes they are convenient, require less maintenance and are quicker than four-way stops.

"We really liked that the county is looking at roundabouts at Lake Sara Road and Moccasin Road," said City Planner Greg Koester. "Some really good short-term goals or projects [are] underway and some good long-term goals and visions for future roadways and roadway improvements."

Improvements to Effingham's downtown

Effingham residents, officials and business owners discussed ideas for improving property maintenance, parking, and the downtown area during another focus group meeting.

"The big thing that we need to be conscious of is ensuring that the community has a sense of ownership of the plan."

— Jake Seid, founding principal for Sightline Planning and Zoning

From left: Public Transit Operations Manager John Althoff, liaison Kelly Lockhart, RE/MAX Realtor and property manager Jeffrey Speer and Effingham County Regional Airport Superintendent Greg Koester discuss future transportation goals for the city of Effingham during a recent focus group.





Left, Effingham Commissioner Larry Micenheimer discusses ideas during the Jan. 23 Focus Group meeting. Right, City Planner Greg Koester organizes his notes at the start of the Jan. 23 Focus Group meeting.

The suggestions and ideas made during the meeting will be brought up to the Steering Committee in early March.

The Jan. 23 meeting saw representation from Joe Sippers Cafe, the Steering Committee, The Thomas Shop, W.S. Broom & Co., Village Wine & Spirits, Baseball Card Connection, Effingham Unit

40 and more.

According to the Comprehensive Plan survey, people believe the city's biggest assets include the downtown area, sporting facilities, local businesses, interstate access and the numerous hotels and restaurants.

Stephanie Brown, urban planner of Chastain & Associates LLC, writes the other table's thoughts on what the city of Effingham is doing well and how they can improve with transportation during the 2050 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meeting Nov. 14 at City Hall. Pictured clockwise from Brown: Brian Hayes, president of Effingham Rumpke; Sara Ruholl, The Beanstalk Boutique owner; Greg Sapp, Premier Broadcasting station manager; Libby Moeller, Effingham city commissioner; Andrew Grunloh, vice president of Grunloh Building; and Jeremy Heuerman, the city's director of public works.





The Beanstalk Boutique owner Sara Ruholl (left) listens while Grunloh Building Vice President Andrew Grunloh discusses ideas for the city's future during a Jan. 23 meeting.

Respondents believe the city's biggest concerns include public schooling, businesses not being able to support themselves, small businesses being threatened by larger corporations that move in, political motivation on small businesses, bicycle access, lack of parking and high property taxes.

Audience members discussed the limited parking, especially downtown. One idea mentioned was a parking garage, but according to Public Works Director Jeremy Heuerman, they are very expensive and not enough people would use it to make it worth the cost. Building costs, possible demolition costs, trash, maintenance and lighting were all concerns discussed with parking garages.

Adding more parking takes more space than people may realize, said Heuerman.

However, not all parking spaces in or around downtown are uti-

lized, like certain street parking spots. Advertising these spaces and possible shuttles could help.

Effingham's Business District could also change in size over the next 25 years, which would influence parking.

An idea brought up during the meeting was maximizing spaces in each building by creating multi-use spaces with residences on the upper floors. In order to make this a reality, one step of the process would include life-safety requirements, like sprinkler systems.

"I really hope we can expand the incentives to make this happen," said Heuerman. "It will not only allow for more housing in the downtown but also protect the surrounding structures."

Survey respondents also shared their biggest concerns for the future of Effingham, including poverty, decline of opportunities, run-down parts of town, the south side needing more grocery stores and restaurants, more places for youth to go and semi trucks driving through small neighborhoods and city streets.

Several ideas to beautify downtown were also brought up, like adding public wi-fi, background music, landscaping, archways at the entrances of downtown and string lights connected to different buildings.

Both Heuerman and City Planner Greg Koester like the idea of having music downtown and arches.

"I really liked the idea of music downtown and possibly some gateway arches," said Heuerman. "It will add to the shopping and dining experience."

"I have been to St. Charles, Missouri, at Christmastime, and now that I think back to it, there was music playing, kind of low and in the background, and it struck me as inviting," said Koester. "A community goal should be to not only maintain the downtown but strive to make it a destination, not only for [the] community but for visitors."



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Siemer Milling Company

For nearly 30 years, Siemer Milling Company of Teutopolis has been giving the annual Harold Kremer Award to employees who exemplify the company values of Respect, Trust, Responsibility, Continuous Improvement, and Commitment to Excellence. Nominations are made by employees about their coworkers. What makes this award a little different is that everyone nominated receives the award! In fact, the company's ideal is for every employee to be a Harold Kremer Award winner.

Harold Kremer worked for Siemer Milling Company from 1954 to his untimely demise in 1996. His career started when he was in high school, filling bags of feed. He steadily advanced to Head Miller, Plant Manager, and finally VP of Production. According to Rick Siemer, "Harold was an amiable man to work with. He liked the people he worked with, and he cared deeply about them. At the same time, he felt there was only one way to do things – the right way; no compromises. That applied to company invest-

ment as well as to individuals' efforts. He created and maintained a highly productive workforce at the same time he helped this little flour miller in rural Illinois to ensure its future – now the 11th largest flour milling company in the U.S."

Harold was working on the company's new mill in Hopkinsville, KY, in 1994 when he was diagnosed with cancer. After a struggle of many months, he passed away on June 30, 1996, one year after the Hopkinsville mill began operation. There is a monument to him at the entrance of that facility. It was not too long afterward, Rick said, that "We were seeking a way to help the employees of our growing multilocation company be aware of each other, and better understand the culture we wanted to achieve. Everyone had known Harold, and recognized that he personified the virtues we prized. Once we decided to create an award, it was natural to name it after him."

Employees are invited every October to write a few sentences to nominate one or more persons. The nominations are all collected, and read

aloud by a company officer – usually the president – at the location Christmas parties (Teutopolis IL, Hopkinsville KY and West Harrison IN). There are always many more nominations than employees – individuals have received as many as eight nominations in a year. Very few persons are overlooked; they're not identified by name, but they are encouraged to think about how they can be better team members; and the team is encouraged to think harder about what everyone has done to further company success.

The HK Award is accompanied by modest tangible rewards. Rick says, "I'm convinced that the Award, basically given by employees to one another, has contributed to our overall effort and accomplishment. Together with the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), started about the same time, they have been big factors in the most successful period of Siemer Milling's 142-year history. We look for people who care about each other and about doing good work, and we strive to reward them."



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Michael Brummer, left, listens while Scott Kabbes discusses ideas during a city council meeting for revitalizing Village Square Mall.

Revitalizing the south side of Effingham

Story and photos by Marie Adamick



Deano Tull is shown doing a skateboard trick on one of the metal ramps that will soon be removed.

Village Square Mall went up for auction in November 2024. The highest qualified bid was \$1.275 million from Square Southtown.

Scott Kabbes, Square Southtown's registered agent, is working with two other managers: Karen Etter and Michael Brummer.

Issues related to the mall were still under litigation earlier this month, but Kabbes and his partners have high hopes that it will become a key component of revitalization efforts on the south end of Effingham.

The trio recently presented their conceptual plans to the Effingham City Council to transform the mall.

"We realized the impact that revitalizing the mall would have on the south side of Effingham, and that became our passion project," Etter told the council. "We wanted to create something really beautiful for Effingham; something that gave people pride in the south town."

Etter, Kabbes and Brummer play pickleball together, and they recognized the need for an indoor pickleball court and began looking at options. They met with Steve Linton, the current mall manager, who showed them the JC Penney space and began formulating ideas. That's where they learned about the auction.

They believe there's a need for health care on that side of the city. They also want to include more areas to shop, restaurants and entertainment for people living or working in that area.

If they succeed in taking over the property, they'll have 212,000 square feet to renovate and create opportunities for growth.

“We want to provide opportunities for our local businesses to grow, and if they want to relocate, we are also going to be diligently looking for new tenants and businesses to come to Effingham to help fulfill some needs that we have that are not being met currently,” said Etter.

They plan to create a council which would pull together people from the city, The Alliance, the Effingham County Chamber, local businesses and industrial leaders on the south side and create a beautification program.

The team also plans to redo the current facade by replacing it with a mix of glass windows and doors with wood and brick elements with modern awnings. They want to enhance the interior walking path to include things to look at like art, artifacts and historical information. They would also renovate the restrooms and install new HVAC systems.

They want to include more green spaces in the parking lot to make it look nicer and help control traffic. They would also create an area near Banker Street for food trucks during festivals and special events like

winter markets, fall festivals and shopping events.

“We are very, very passionate about this project,” said Kabbes. “We’ve invested significant time, eight months; quite a bit of funds – architectural, legal, deposit on the purchase – so that we can build a plan for Square Southtown.”

Skate Park

Deano Tull, 35, has been skateboarding since middle school when Effingham’s Hendelmeyer Skate Park was in its infancy. He and his friends would spend time rollerblading and playing basketball. Some of his friends would skateboard, too, and Tull saw them jumping off the ground on their boards and doing tricks.

“I just transitioned over, and I fell in love,” said Tull. “I just started watching video after video of all these pros and how to skateboard. I was glued.”

The community is trying to raise money for Phase 2 of the Skate Park, which would include more ramps and space for skaters.

Left, different gaming computer parts for sale are shown at Effingham Computer Sales & Service. Below, shown is Effingham Computer Sales & Service’s new building Wayne Moran purchased and opened in 2023.



The Hendelmeyer Skate Park was created in April 2006, which only included four metal ramps, a few rails and a few benches. Before Tull became as involved as he is now in the Skate Park, a group of skaters were trying to raise money to build the original park because they kept getting into trouble skating downtown and on private properties.

The group of skaters held a public demonstration of different tricks, which helped get the word out and more kids interested in the sport.

“After so long, I think they did a few of those bake sales and car washes,” said Tull. “Then, they had an anonymous donor hand over

the money they needed for the kind of concrete – and boom! No one knows who that anonymous donor is, which a lot of them think we do know, but he just handed the money over and got it going.”

Tull became the spearhead of the skate park in 2011 when the people who got the skate park built moved on – became fathers or moved. One moved to Chicago; one moved to Colorado; another moved to Belgium.

Phase I of the Skate Park plan was completed in April 2023, which saw the addition of the middle concrete piece with its railings and



Deano Tull points toward the camera while doing a skateboard trick. Below, Tull points out how much money the skate park has raised, which is about \$150,000.





Matt Meyer is shown going through the blueprints of one of the new Mid-Illinois Concrete buildings.

ramps. Tull is trying to “strike a nerve,” and find another person like the original anonymous donor to donate the rest of the money the park needs for Phase 2 by posting on social media and hosting Effingham’s annual Ham City Jam.

Phase 2 will bring in new concrete ramps along the east and west sides of the skate park, and it will see the removal of the metal ramps, metal pieces and wooden pieces scattered about. Right now, the skate park needs another \$50,000 to \$60,000 to complete Phase 2. Tull hopes to have the money raised and work completed by April depending on how the architects, blueprints and bureaucracy pan out.

Since 2011, Tull has hosted the annual Ham City Jam, which is the day after the city’s EffingHAM-JAM.

“I remember a long time ago, the city reached out and they’re like, ‘Do you care if we call our event the Ham-Jam, even though yours is the Ham City Jam?’ And I’m like, ‘Does not bother me at all,’” said Tull. “‘It’s all the same city, so I don’t mind at all.’”

Tull said Ham City Jam brings out people of all ages, including 4- and 6-year-old kids, and people from out of state. Since Phase 1, there have been barbecues and other small contests held there.

“I had a lot of families, a lot of moms and dads come up saying, ‘You run this contest very well. You do your homework. You do a lot of work on getting your sponsors and getting enough prizes and making it well worth our trip to come here for a weekend,’” said Tull.

Effingham Computer Sales & Service

One south-side business that has slowly but steadily grown in recent years is Effingham Computer Sales & Service. Owner Wayne Moran was in the Village Square Mall between 2021 and 2023 and then moved to a small building along South Banker Street, near the mall.

Moran is the sole proprietor, but his son sometimes helps him around the store. Moran has been in the computer business for more than 20 years. When he started, he was working at a small table in his garage. About a year ago, Effingham Computer Sales & Service became a UPS access point, which also allows people to drop off Amazon returns. This has “blown up on us,” said Moran.

Since becoming an access point, Effingham Computer Sales & Service receives more than 1,000 packages each month. UPS visits them once a day to pick up packages.

“It brings a lot of people in here is what the design of it was,” said Moran. His main goal of the business is to help people.

“There’ll be many, many times I’ll have people come in here, and they don’t even end up paying anything because it’s something simple we can help them with,” said Moran. “That’s the main goal.”

When Moran was searching for his new building, he looked at at least 20 different places in town and landed on staying on the south side.

“We wanted to be part of what will hopefully be a regrowth on the south end, and there are so many of my customers who have said that they appreciate the fact that we stayed here instead of moving out by the interstate, which was one of the things that we looked at because there’s not enough retail on the south end of Effingham,” said Moran. “So we definitely love the south end, and we fully support it.”

Mid-Illinois Concrete

Another business with big plans is Mid-Illinois Concrete in the southwest part of the city. The company is building a new concrete batch plant, a new corporate office building and a new corporate shop off of Commerce Avenue.

According to Mid-Illinois Concrete President Matt Meyer, they hope to have the new corporate building and new corporate shop open and ready to go by October if the weather permits. The new concrete batch plant was open and ready in May 2024, which cost \$3 million. They plan on selling the land where the current batch plant sits. The corporate building costs \$1.4 million, and the corporate shop costs \$350,000. The projects are completely funded by Mid-Illinois Concrete.

Meyer says that it's always been the plan to get Mid-Illinois Concrete into one big area, which will significantly increase efficiency.

They will also extend Pike Avenue about half of a block east for the flow of traffic and for their south entrance.

Industrial Development

The city bought 154 acres of land along South Banker Street just north of John Boos & Co. for large industrial development.

According to City Administrator Steve Miller, the city received projects from Intersect Illinois, a state program, where they showcased the land for industrial purposes.

Because the project is still in early development stages, Miller couldn't discuss it further.

"We do have interest in the property, and the city is looking into different projects for industrial development purposes," said Miller.

Securing the property and having it zoned is an initial step in the process for an industry coming into town.

"Engineering has spent a lot of time in updating the sidewalks along Banker Street as well, and we've made a lot of water line improvements around the [former] Fedders building, so that there was adequate fire protection," said Miller.

Public Works Director Jeremy Heuerman said the city budgets its money in order to replace water mains, line sanitary sewers and resurface roads.

"We have been working on sidewalk improvements down Banker Street for quite a few years now, as the budget allows," said Heuerman.

"We constantly apply for grants for assistance with roadway extensions, bike paths and lighting projects to help meet the demands of future growth and by improving the quality of life in the area."

"We wanted to be part of what will hopefully be a regrowth on the south end ... we definitely love the south end, and we fully support it."

— Wayne Moran, Effingham Computer Sales & Service owner

Shown is the concrete mixer at Mid-Illinois Concrete's new batch plant.



The Equity

The Equity, the largest independent agricultural cooperative in Illinois, supports growers and producers with essential inputs for their operations. With 22 locations in Illinois and Indiana, they operate in five business units: Agronomy, Grain, Feed and Livestock, Energy, and Hardware. The Equity's team is dedicated to delivering operational excellence by providing information, exploring opportunities, and supporting profitable roles for producers.

To facilitate access to advanced precision and innovative technology, The Equity has established two affiliated agricultural technology companies. These entities, Planters Precision and Green Creek Drones, support farms in enhancing margins, improving speed, increasing yields, and boosting operational efficiencies.

Planters Precision is a leading precision agriculture technology brand offering solutions to maximize yields and operational efficiencies.

With three locations in Montrose, Gays, and Moweaqua, their team supports growers in and out of the field throughout the growing season. They offer a range of solutions for planters, sprayers, toolbars, and harvest equipment, designed to meet the ever-changing needs of agriculture. In partnership with companies like Precision Planting, 360 Yield Center, Harvest International, and GTS, Planters Precision brings data-driven solutions to operations. With the ability to custom-build or retrofit existing technology, they make upgraded technology feasible for all farms.

Green Creek Drones, a partnership between The Equity and WebAir, LLC, offers agricultural spray drones, enabling growers to take control of their aerial crop protection applications and seeding. The Green Creek Drones team offers comprehensive expertise from sales to service, ensuring customers are equipped with the prop-

er knowledge and licensing to operate drones. They also provide ongoing parts, repair, and maintenance options to ensure drones operate at their best. Additionally, they offer custom drone application services in partnership with The Equity locations across their trade territory throughout the growing season.

Planters Precision, Green Creek Drones, and The Equity are committed to staying at the forefront of agricultural technology to ensure growers in the region are equipped for an ever-evolving market.

Learn more about these brands by visiting theequity.com, plantersprecision.com, and greencreekdrones.com.





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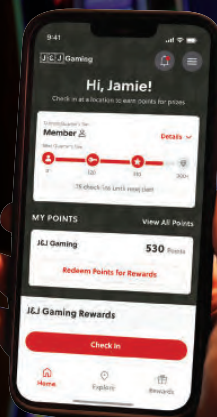
J&J Gaming expanded our footprint by securing approval from the Nevada Gaming Commission to integrate Golden Route Operations, LLC into J&J Gaming's Nevada Distributed Gaming Route Operations. This expansion is a turning point for J&J Gaming and further establishes J&J as a leader in setting the standard for the gaming industry. Today, J&J Gaming—alongside its subsidiaries and affiliates—is proud to be the largest privately owned and top revenue-producing terminal operator in the nation, with gaming operations spanning Illinois, Pennsylvania, Montana, Nebraska, and Nevada.

Dedication to Our Values

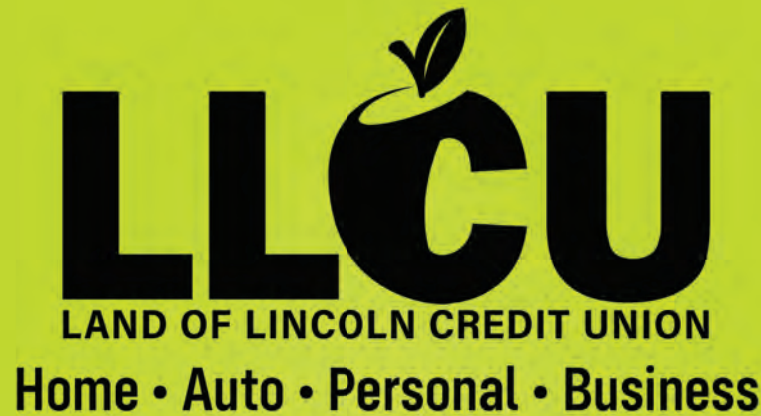
Rooted in the values established by our founders—Jim Jansen, Kay Jansen, Jack Jansen, and Robert Willenborg—J&J Gaming remains steadfast in delivering unparalleled quality and service to our partner establishments. We provide the most up-to-date gaming fleet and offer 24/7 | 365 world-class service and support from our team of gaming experts to over 3,600 gaming establishments. Recognizing our dedication to excellence and growth, J&J was ranked #1,746 on the Inc. 5000 Series among the fastest-growing private companies in America!

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Brookstone Estates

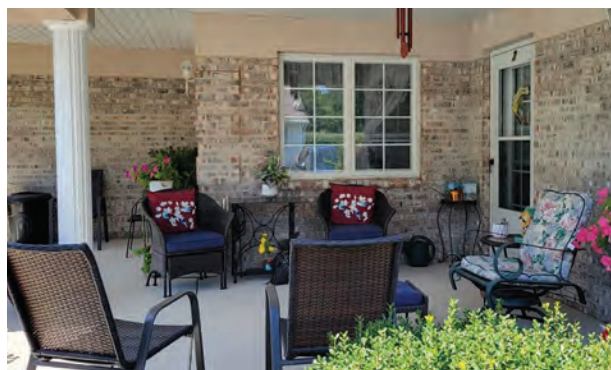
Brookstone Estates of Effingham is the county's only supportive living community for adults, 65 years of age and older, that need some assistance with daily activities for continued independent living.

What is Supportive Living?

Administered through the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, the Supportive Living program combines apartment style living with personal care and other services that are covered by the state's Medicaid program. What does this mean to you? This program is available to those on Medicaid or social security, or private pay individuals, who, after their funds have depleted, may be covered by this financial safety net, thus not forcing you to move to another community or to a traditional nursing home. Thanks to this unique state program, Supportive Living residents can live affordably and independently in an environment where personal choice, dignity, privacy, and

individuality are emphasized.

Members of the Brookstone Community enjoy an assisted living lifestyle, where they receive a discrete helping hand and the confidence they need to live independently. Brookstone Estates offers a robust activity calendar and social opportunities, from planned special events to spontaneous gatherings. There is always a neighbor or two up for a good time and friends and family are welcome to join the fun! Our care team goes above and beyond to support an active



lifestyle and create memory-making opportunities. Services offered include personalized care plans created in conjunction with health care providers, three delicious home cooked meals served daily in the dining room, medication management, daily wellness checks, assistance with daily activities such as bathing and dressing, certified clinical staff on site around the clock, housekeeping, laundry, maintenance, and transportation assistance in Effingham. Brookstone Estates offers a comfortable, private home to individuals, offering one and two-bedroom apartments with substantial living space, decorated to your personal taste with full kitchens, private bathrooms with safety features, spacious walk-in closets, emergency call services, individually controlled heating and cooling, complimentary Wi-Fi, cable television access, with private patio options all in a beautifully renovated building.

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Ribbon-Cuttings

The Effingham County Chamber celebrated the opening of new businesses, businesses relocating and expanding and new ownership of businesses in 2024.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the **University of Illinois Extension Office in Effingham** to celebrate its renovation. The local Extension office serves the community by offering a wide range of educational programs and resources. They focus on areas such as agriculture, horticulture, energy and environment, nutrition and wellness, family life and youth development through 4-H programs. The Extension

office provides research-based knowledge to improve lives and businesses in Effingham, Clay, Fayette and Jasper counties. For more information about their programs and services, visit <https://Extension.Illinois.edu/CEFJ>. Pictured with University of Illinois Extension Office employees and County Director Jessica Wells are Chamber Ambassadors Lisa Cornell, Tonya Siner, Dan Capes and Michael Wall.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Nov. 14 to celebrate the reopening of **East Side Veterinary Clinic**. Now under the ownership of Effingham Veterinary Clinic, this marks their second location in Effingham and one of three total locations, including Newton Vet Clinic in Newton. Between the three clinics, they have 14 full-time veterinarians on staff. The ribbon-cutting ceremony gave community members a chance to explore the newly renovated East Side Veterinary Clinic, which delivers comprehensive care for pets and their families, with a state-of-the-art facility equipped to provide advanced diagnostics, treatment options and optimal outcomes for a variety of veterinary

needs. Services include soft tissue surgery, diagnostics, wellness exams and hospital care for various species. From left, front row, are Mikaela Gard, Jodi Kalber, Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner, Ashley Fox, Dr. Chad Ely, Dr. Dale Spindler, Chamber Board Chair-Elect Jay Buehnerkemper, Chamber Ambassador Steve Will, City of Effingham Economic Development Specialist Sasha Althoff and Dr. Rochelle Oseland; back row, Chamber Ambassador Layna Bond, Teresa Wente, Kaylee Phillips, Carlos Ramirez, Janie Wallace, Dave Swingler, Kaylee Kirby, City of Effingham Economic Development Director Todd Hull, Chamber Ambassador Clint Holkenbrink, Dr. Bernie Haarmann, and City of Effingham Administrator Steve Miller.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber recently celebrated a ribbon-cutting ceremony for **Continental Mills Inc., dba The Krusteaz Company**, July 19 at their facility, located at 1200 Stevens Ave., Effingham. Founded in 1932, The Krusteaz Company began with the creation of the first just-add-water pie crust by Rose Charters in Seattle. Combining “crust” and “ease,” the company quickly became a household name. Today, The Krusteaz Company produces a variety of breakfast, baking and snack products. In celebration of their 10-year anniversary in the Effingham community, The Krusteaz Company hosted a free pancake breakfast July 20 at their facility.

Shown representing The Krusteaz Company is Dan Regenhardt, Tammy Logsdon, Patsy Black, Gloria Hissong-Baker, Donny Schanks, Ken Niebrugge, John Tucker, Danielle Niebrugge, Francisco Aleman, Susan Spears, Jason Grubaugh, Wendy Will and Lis Niemeyer. Shown representing the Effingham County Chamber is Chamber Board Chair-Elect Jay Buehnerkemper, Chamber Board Ex-Officio Courtney Yockey and Chamber Ambassadors Dan Patton, Michael Wall, Randy Jones, Tonya Siner, Russ Runde and Allison Stevens. Representing the City of Effingham is Economic Development Specialist Sasha Althoff and Economic Development Director Todd Hull.



The Effingham County Fair

kicked off its 80th anniversary celebration with an Effingham County Chamber ribbon-cutting ceremony in July. Fair board President Phil Hartke shared about new and enhanced attractions throughout fair week. Among the highlights was an enhanced carnival ride area, which had been upgraded thanks to the support of community donors. Special recognition was given to businesses and individuals who contributed to the new \$165,000 concrete area for amusement rides, including Effingham County, Effingham Asphalt, R & H Plumbing, Heating & Electric, 3 Sisters Logistics, D Lines Inc. and JT's Tree & Crane. Last year also introduced a brand-new feature, Victory Lane, which showcased remote-control car racing. Additionally, visitors



enjoyed live wood-carving demonstrations. To commemorate the 80th anniversary, a fireworks show was held. Hartke's presentation emphasized the fair's continued commitment to entertainment and community engagement, solidifying its place as a cherished event for families, visitors and locals. For more information, visit EffinghamCountyFair.com or call 888-854-3247.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly opened **Home2 Suites by Hilton Effingham**. Located at 1201 North Raney, Effingham, the all-suite hotel offers guests spacious suites equipped with full kitchens, complimentary Wi-Fi and flexible workspaces, catering to both short-term and extended stays. Guests can enjoy a complimentary hot breakfast, access to a 24-hour fitness center, an indoor pool and the Spin2 Cycle combined laundry and fitness facility. The hotel is

pet-friendly. The hotel is owned and managed by McHugh Hospitality Group. Founded in 1986, McHugh Hospitality Group has developed, owned and operated 24 hotels across Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Missouri. The ribbon-cutting event was attended by Chamber members, local officials and community leaders. Among those pictured are Home2Suites Michael and John McHugh, Home2Suites employees, Chamber Ambassadors, City of Effingham officials Steve Miller and Todd Hull, and Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester.



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▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber helped celebrate the grand opening of **CW Motorsports'** new location at 10998 IL 33, Effingham, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Founded in 2011 by Cody Willenborg, CW Motorsports has grown from a local business to a nationally recognized name in the motorsport industry. Cody's journey began at age 14, leading him to graduate at the top of his class from MMI in Orlando, Florida. Specializing in new, used and re-manufactured parts and accessories, CW Motorsports offers an inventory of over 4,000 items.



▲ ▲ A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on March 13 for **EpLegends Martial Arts**, 209 N. Fourth Street, Effingham. EpLegends offers martial arts programs for adults, including fitness kickboxing and self-defense Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and over 500 youth

are enrolled in their Kids Program. From left, front row, are Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Lisa Cornell, owners Mandy Watson and Chad Hawkins, Former Chamber President & CEO Lucinda Hart, and Chamber Ambassador Randy Jones.



The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Repking Eye Care** as one of its newest members. The Chamber celebrated their grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Located at 113 E. Main St., Teutopolis, Repking Eye Care has been serving the community since 2024. They offer comprehensive eye exams, vision correction, emergency eye care, and treatment for various eye diseases including macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and cataracts. Their optical department features a wide selection of designer frames and precision lenses. Dr.

Brian Repking leads the practice with a team of experienced professionals that use advanced diagnostic technology. Repking Eye Care operates Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. They can be reached at 217-903-4117. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit their website at RepkingEyeCare.com. From left are Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner, Allyson Bergbower, Natalie Repking, Dave Repking, Repking children — Aubrey, Lizzie, Brayden and Grayce, Dr. Brian Repking, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall, Chamber Vice President of Workforce Development Sarah Zerrusen, and Chamber Ambassadors Randy Jones and Steve Will.



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The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Olive Tree Marketplace** as a new member. The Chamber hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony, marking Olive Tree Marketplace's expansion into Effingham at 302 W. Jefferson Ave. Olive Tree Marketplace offers a diverse range of products that cater to those seeking something special, whether it's gourmet ingredients or unique décor pieces for the home. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack, Lisa Cornell, Dan Patton and Michael Wall, Brand Manager Myah Stuenke, Chamber Ambassador Layna Bond, Owners Terry and Lynnae Yates, City of Effingham Economic Development Director Todd Hull, Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner, Chamber Board Chair-Elect Jay Buehnerkemper, and Chamber Ambassadors Jeff Mihlbachler and Russ Runde.



The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **New Horizons Orthotics and Prosthetics** as a new member. The Chamber celebrated its new location in Effingham with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 606 S. Fourth Street. New Horizons Orthotics and Prosthetics provides comprehensive orthotic and prosthetic care to improve the quality of life for individuals with mobility challenges. The team of certified practitioners offers custom orthotics and prosthetics tailored to meet the unique needs of each patient. They use advanced technology and personalized care to help patients achieve their mobility goals. "We are excited for New Horizons O&P to serve the residents of Effingham County with their high-quality orthotic and prosthetic services," said Former Interim Chamber President & CEO Jeff Fritchtnitch. From left, front row, are Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack and Steve Will; back row, Chamber Ambassadors Randy Jones and Jon Frohning, owner Brandon Quick, Office Administrator Amy Day, Casey, Hudson and Benny Sparks, Certified Prosthetist Andrew Sparks and Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall.

The Effingham County Chamber, recognized as the leading business organization in the region, remains committed to providing essential community and business leadership while supporting the needs of both Chamber members and Effingham County residents. Representing 550 businesses and over 15,000 employees, the Chamber plays a vital role in attracting interest from growing companies, engaging government leaders to address local priorities, and supporting community leaders in making Effingham County an ideal place to live, work, and play.

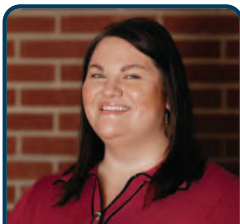
In the coming year, the Chamber will continue to deliver valuable resources and advocate for the success of its members and the community. Signature programs such as Lunch & Learns, Women in Business, Kickoff to Education, and Trades, Skills & Manufacturing Day will remain central to its efforts. Businesses are encouraged to explore the wide range of programs and resources available, designed to support various industries and business models. From networking opportunities to professional development events, there is something for every member to enhance their operations and align with their goals. Participating in these offerings allows businesses to strengthen connections, stay informed, and contribute to the growth of the local community.

As the Chamber expands its programs and services to meet the evolving needs of the community, its mission remains steadfast: to champion business interests and drive regional prosperity.



MEET THE TEAM

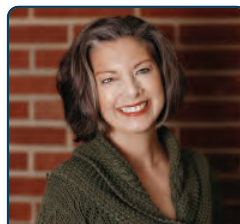
EFFINGHAM COUNTY CHAMBER



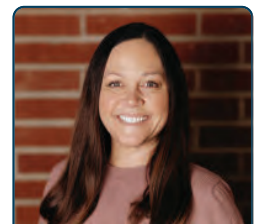
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EPC Welcomes National Acts

BlackHawk, Randy Travis, Jo Dee Messina, Jeremy Camp and more coming this year!

The Effingham Performance Center is ready for spring with national performers set to take the stage, as the theatre celebrates its 15th season.

"This season has been one of our most successful, and we hope to continue that success as we welcome more national touring artists to our stage," said Kim Jansen, executive director of the EPC.

Shows for the season included Aaron Tippin, Terri Clark, Kenny G. and Lee Greenwood with artists including Randy Travis and BlackHawk set to perform this spring.

The EPC will be announcing the lineup for Season 16 on July 12, 2025. Season brochures will be sent to patrons in late July.

Tickets are available for purchase through the EPC's Box Office, by stopping by or calling (217) 540-2788, or online at www.ticketmaster.com/epc.



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UPCOMING SHOWS

DATE/TIME	SHOW	TOP TIER	LEVEL A	LEVEL B
Mar. 08 7:00 pm	Hometown Showdown by Effingham CEO	\$60	\$45	\$35
Mar. 08 7:00 pm	Mike Super: Magic & Illusion	\$55	\$35	\$25
Mar. 14 7:00 pm	Starship featuring Mickey Thomas	\$65	\$50	\$40
Mar. 21 7:00 pm	Hank & My Honky Tonk Heroes	\$45	\$35	\$25
Mar. 22 7:00 pm	Here Come The Mummies	\$35	\$35	\$35
Mar. 28 7:00 pm	The Drifters, The Platters, & The Coasters	\$65	\$55	\$35
Apr. 05 7:00 pm	BlackHawk SOLD OUT	\$55	\$40	\$30
Apr. 11 7:00 pm	Randy Travis: The More Life Tour SOLD OUT	\$59.50	\$49.50	\$39.50
Apr. 12 7:00 pm	Great White & Slaughter	\$75	\$55	\$45
Apr. 25 7:00 pm	EPC Idol Finals	\$10	\$10	\$10
May 10 7:00 pm	Jeremy Camp: These Days Tour	\$89.75	\$56.75	\$36.75
May 31 7:00 pm	Scott Wattles & The Blue Suede Crew	\$25	\$25	\$25
June 7 7:00 pm	Jo Dee Messina	\$80	\$60	\$50
Aug. 3 7:00 pm	We The Kingdom	\$69.99	\$49.99	\$29.99
Aug. 20 7:30 pm	Happy Together Tour 2025	\$75	\$59	\$49
Oct. 26 7:00 pm	Colin Mochrie & Brad Sherwood	\$65	\$50	\$40



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Sara Ruholl embroiders a shirt in the back room of her downtown Effingham shop, The Beanstalk Boutique. In back is boutique manager Darian Appelt.

Effingham County ranked **THIRD IN STATE** as best place for small business owners

Story and photo by Cathy Griffith

Sara Ruholl's downtown Effingham shop, The Beanstalk Boutique, offers unique, personalized items that customers love. Ruholl notes what sets her business apart from other retailers.

"You can get it online, but you don't know what you're going to get. You can see it in person, touch and feel it. Everything is stitched or pressed locally here in this building," said Ruholl, referring to the T-shirts and embroidery on clothing and apparel she offers. "We are a very niche business, and we are very different, and I don't think that's a really big thing where we are in the Midwest."

Once a year, the day after Black Friday – Small Business Saturday – promotes community businesses and encourages people to shop locally. But for small businesses in Effingham County, that happens

year-round, as proven in a recent study in which the county was ranked third among the best places in the state for small business owners.

To determine how attractive a region is for small business owners, SmartAsset compared the number of tax returns that report small business income and compared that to the total tax-filing population of the region. Next, it compared the total amount of small business income to the overall amount of income reported in each region and then measured the change in those variables over a five-year period.

The high ranking doesn't surprise Ruholl, who feels there's much support from the Effingham community, especially downtown.

"Our downtown is really beautiful, and it's thriving. I think we're definitely lucky to have all the support we have in our community. I've been to other downtowns, and they're not as nice and welcom-

ing as ours,” she said.

According to City of Effingham Economic Development Specialist Sasha Althoff, The Beanstalk Boutique is one example of the success of small businesses in Effingham, many of which have grown over time.

“John Boos started out as a tiny business,” she said of the world-renowned company. “It isn’t often you see any of our small businesses close. Even during COVID, we didn’t have any that really closed. When they close, it’s due to moving on and doing something else, not that it fails. We have an agency that always wants to know what stores have closed, and our close list is always tiny. It’s hard to think of them.”

Effingham Economic Development Director Todd Hull believes the success of small businesses can be attributed to the entrepreneurial spirit in Effingham that dates back to when the interstates were built.

“I think once the interstates came in, that was an impetus for additional small businesses to be created. Just as Effingham has grown, it’s provided more opportunity. There’s more people coming into the city, so there’s more need for those businesses and opportunities for those businesses,” he said.

The city has also helped foster small businesses through its Tax Increment Finance Rehabilitation program. Hull notes the program is a great way for small businesses to upgrade and maintain their buildings.

“It’s been a good program in the downtown,” he said, adding the area is vibrant.

Other incentives small businesses can take advantage of if they’re located in an Enterprise Zone is sales tax exemption on building materials and real estate tax abatement. Althoff said having both TIF and EZ programs makes the city unique.

“With a small business, just a little bit of help can go a long way for them. We feel these programs can make a big impact for them,” she said.

Effingham County’s Revolving Loan Fund program has also aided small businesses. Although the program is available for businesses of any size, Effingham County Board member Dave Campbell said the small loans are geared more toward small businesses. The loans charge 3% interest over five years.

Campbell isn’t surprised by the county’s statewide ranking, attributing it to the work ethic of residents, as well as location.

“I think it just shows Effingham County has a strong work ethic, and we’re a good solid economic county,” he said.

While small businesses thrive in Effingham County, Ruholl admits it doesn’t come easy.

“You definitely have to work at it,” she said. “I feel like there’s always new ones opening up. Seems like monthly there’s a new business or two opening up in Effingham.”

Ruholl said there is more than just local residents shopping at her boutique. Many customers come from Mattoon, Charleston, and even Indiana.

“They’ll come here just to shop in our downtown because it is unique and thriving,” she said.

Ruholl believes the success of small businesses extends beyond customer support to businesses supporting each other. Ruholl’s boutique embroiders uniforms for local businesses, including Probst Refrigeration next door.

“Instead of them going to the big places, they’re coming to us to embroider locally,” she said. “For that small business to support us, it’s cool to see it come full circle.”

How communities benefit when consumers shop local

When consumers think about which stores to patronize, locally owned businesses may be the smartest option for a number of reasons — not the least of which is the way such enterprises benefit the communities they call home.

More money kept in the community

Shopping locally means that more money will stay in the community. According to recent research from Civic Economics, local eateries return nearly 79 percent of revenue to the community, compared to just over 30 percent for chain restaurants. Overall, for every \$100 spent at a local business, around \$73 remains in the community, versus roughly \$43 when shopping at a non-locally owned business.

Get a personal touch

Local business owners typically are inclined to go the extra mile for their customers and are personally invested in the services and products they are selling. As a result, shopping locally tends to be a personalized experience. Furthermore, a local business owner may be more amenable to ordering products for specific clientele. Such personalized service is typically not accessible when shopping big box stores or other shops where owners are off-site.

Lines are short

Waiting in long lines for checkout or to pick up merchandise ordered online can drain consumers’ energy and contribute to stress. Local businesses tend to have short lines and small crowds, which can lead to a more pleasant shopping experience.

Generates tax revenue

Local businesses generate more tax revenue per sales dollar, according to Rubicon, a digital marketplace for waste and recycling businesses. Taxes paid by local small businesses go to support schools, parks, roads, and other programs that benefit the community as well.

Support nonprofits

Local businesses often support good work in the community, such as nonprofit groups. These can include schools and sports teams, among other groups. According to Dr. Sue Lynn Sasser, professor of economics at the University of Central Oklahoma, studies indicate nonprofits “receive 250 percent more support from small businesses than larger ones.”

Support other local businesses

Local businesses support other local businesses by buying and selling among each other. A local, independently owned restaurant may source its ingredients from local farms, which means visitors to such eateries are supporting multiple local businesses each time they dine out.

Small businesses are a boon to the economy, particularly local economies. These enterprises help their communities in a multitude of ways.



A house is being constructed Feb. 3 in Hidden Hills Subdivision. The subdivision is to be developed in two phases with a total of 53 lots.

Annexation a key to addressing Effingham's housing shortage

Story and photos by Cathy Griffith

Effingham city officials have annexed more than 250 acres of property into the city in the last four years. While many involved existing businesses have become contiguous to the city limits, the recent annexation of a residential subdivision and others may hold the key to helping address the city's housing shortage.

Hidden Hills Subdivision was annexed last year. Plans for the nearly 44-acre property include 53 lots ranging in size from three-tenths to 1.7 acres. Houses are already being built on the property, located along Evergreen Avenue east of Third Street, with 16 lots

under contract by the end of January.

According to Todd Kabbes of K&K Investment Company, which is developing the subdivision through a joint venture with East Evergreen Development LLC, most of those buyers already live in the

city or elsewhere in the county and are looking to upgrade.

A subdivision developer, Jordan Koerner, said they continue to get calls because of the lack of housing. Koerner plans to build a home for him and his family in the subdivision.

“Our group, they just really thank the activity of Todd as a citizen taking an interest in continuing to open up housing opportunities in Effingham,” he said.

Kabbes is busy developing another subdivision, which he hopes will also be annexed into the city in the near future.

River Ridge is a 22-acre property located just west of the city’s water treatment plant along U.S. Route 40. The subdivision will consist of 23 wooded and sloping lots ranging from 1 acre to 7 acres. Kabbes said the subdivision is still in the early stages of development, and plans are to present the final plats for it to the city later this summer.

As a career developer, Kabbes said he always tries to listen to what people are interested in, and River Ridge is the result of that.

“There’s not really an area that’s inside the city that offers larger lots like this. It seems like there’s a lot of demand from people for larger lots, so that’s a development where we’re trying to offer something that’s not really currently available,” he said.

However, he notes that there is also a demand for smaller lots, which has led to the development of Oak Point Subdivision. The subdivision is geared toward retirees and others who want small square footage and less yard to maintain.

“I have a number of people saying we’re looking to downsize and just nowhere for us to go. So, we kind of filled that with those comments in mind,” he said.

The property is located directly behind and north of Kohl’s Department Store and borders Lake Pauline to the north of it and Lake Pointe Apartments to the west. Kabbes describes it as a higher-density development with 14 lots that range in size from two-tenths to 25/100 of an acre that will have single-family homes.

“They can have as small as 1,350 square feet minimum living space,” he said, noting several of the lots will accommodate walk-out basements.

He said another draw of the subdivision is its convenient location near Walmart and other retailers at the city’s north end.

Work on the subdivision started in 2023. Infrastructure and utilities have been brought in, and Kabbes said his Kabbes Development Group is just now promoting it.

Why the recent boom in residential development?

“I applaud the city of Effingham for taking the initiative to add the residential properties to the EZ Zone.”

— Todd Kabbes, K&K Investment Company

Some of the lots in the Oak Point Subdivision bordering Oak Point Drive are shown overlooking Lake Pauline.



Kabbes points to the Effingham/Effingham County Enterprise Zone. The subdivisions are all located in the Enterprise Zone. While River Ridge has been annexed into the Enterprise Zone, it has not yet been annexed into city limits.

Kabbes has been facilitating subdivisions in and around Effingham for many years. Previous developments in the city include Southwind and Beckman Estates, and ones by Lake Sara include Lakeshore Estates, Meadowbrook Estates and Stoneridge.

But for the past several years, much of the development has occurred in the smaller communities outside of Effingham. Kabbes said it's been hard to compete with the subsidized lot prices those communities were selling people, which were well under what it actually costs to develop the property.

That is until residential properties were included in Effingham's Enterprise Zone's incentives a couple of years ago.

"I applaud the city of Effingham for taking the initiative to add the residential properties to the EZ Zone," said Kabbes. "It's going to greatly help grow residential development in and around the city of Effingham."

Enterprise Zone incentives include a five-year property tax abatement on the increase to the base amount of a newly constructed single-family home located within the Enterprise Zone. Additionally, all newly constructed single-family homes located within the boundary with a cost of \$50,000 or more will be eligible for a sales tax exemption on all permanently affixed building materials.

"There's no sales tax on building materials, and there's up to a

five-year abatement of property taxes on the building -- the home -- so basically, you're just paying the taxes on the lot," said Kabbes. "I've had a number of people tell me that those incentives really enabled them to justify going ahead with building a new home even knowing that interest rates are still high and construction costs are still high."

Kabbes considers the residential addition to the Enterprise Zone a game changer for Effingham, adding there have not been a lot of options for residential development inside the city limits of Effingham for several years, especially on the north end of the city.

One reason is development costs have skyrocketed.

"The cost of land is one issue, but then the cost of developing has become very expensive also," he said.

However, Kabbes believes the biggest challenge for Effingham and many other communities is a lack of trade workers.

"We've had a number of people, whether it's general contractors to plumbers, electricians, bricklayers, roofers, etc., we've had a lot of retirements and there just aren't enough people to meet the demand in the market," he said. "I know people right now that are on a wait-list to build in 2026."

Kabbes notes that the three subdivisions mean about 90 more lots are available for housing in the city. As one of the few communities an hour away from major markets with interstates, highways, and railroads, he believes city growth is inevitable.

"It only makes sense that it should grow," he said.

A sign promotes Oak Point Subdivision while some of the property can be seen in the background.



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Visit Downtown Effingham

Just beyond a 198-foot cross located at the junction of Interstates 57 and 70 lies one of the most progressive cities in Illinois named Effingham. A short drive into the city brings you to the heart of downtown where you'll find fascinating museums, galleries, a coffee roaster, entrepreneurs and several restaurants and bars. You can spend a day

taking it all in or experience downtown Effingham with an overnight stay in one of the coolest Airbnb spaces in town. Located above XCHNG, these Airbnb's are available for short or long term stays. Another feature is Effingham Public Library located just across the street from Effingham County Museum.

Downtown Effingham hosts a number of fun events during the year including Farmers Market each Saturday morning during the summer months, Food Trucks on the square each Friday during the summer months, Ladies Night Out, seasonal open houses, EffinghamHAM JAM barbeque festival, Cruise Night, a huge Halloween parade, a downtown Trick or Treat event and a marvelous Christmas celebration that includes tasty treats, stunning lights and a visit from Santa at Santa's House. Traditional activities during the Christmas celebration include carriage rides, live entertainment, an ice rink, light parade, train rides and live reindeer, to name a few!

There are many monstrous light displays that stay all winter long on the lawn of the Effingham County Museum as an awesome photo op for thousands of visitors.

The City of Effingham was proud to be ranked second in a lineup of Illinois' Best Downtown Areas in 2022! Effingham invites you to come see what draws thousands to visit this thriving downtown area all throughout the year!



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Neoga & Sigel

Neoga, Illinois is located on Route 45 and right off Interstate 57 at exit 177. Neoga is 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 1,398 with the 2020 census. Neoga was incorporated in 1856. Neoga means "deer" in the Kickapoo language.

Neoga hosts a strong banking and finance industry, with First Neighbor Bank and First Mid Bank 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.

Sigel is an incorporated town in Shelby County, Illinois with a population of 329 at the 2020 census. Sigel is located in the southeast corner of Shelby County. U.S. Route 45 is the main roadway to and from Sigel while Interstate 57 runs just to the east of the town. Sigel is about 5 miles northeast of Effingham.

The town was named after Franz



Lake Mattoon in Neoga.

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Sigel, (1824-1902), a Union general in the American Civil War. Jack Berch, singer, was born in Sigel. Sigel is home to St. Michael 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. St. Michael School in Sigel constructed

a school addition to replace the 1929, two story school building. To learn more about this exciting development for Sigel, visit their website at www.ssmcs.org

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Greenup & Toledo

The village of Greenup is a small community of just over 1,300 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.

The village of Toledo is 5 miles north west of Greenup and is the county seat of Cumberland County. Illinois Route 121 passes through the village. As of the 2020 census, there were 1,161 people living within the village.

Greenup and Toledo are located just south of the famed Lincoln Log Cabin, home to the Abraham Lincoln family after they moved to Illinois, as well as the Thomas Lincoln Cemetery, the final resting place of Abraham's father and step-mother. Greenup and Toledo are located less than 30 minutes from Effingham, Mattoon and Charleston, providing residents with numerous options for entertainment and employment, all within a short commute.

Cumberland Community Unit School District 77, housing the elementary, middle and high school, is located between Toledo and Greenup on Illinois Route 121. Those in the Greenup and Toledo area 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.

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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 interstates 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 Champions Cardinals

Irene Hunt, author of the classic "Across Five Aprils"

Albert Isley, Illinois judge, lawyer, and state senator

Burl Ives, folk singer, author, and actor

Ross Wolf, baseball pitcher; played for the SK Wyverns of the Korea Baseball Championship; formerly played for several Major League Baseball teams

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New Owners of Arab Pest Control

Arab Termite & Pest Control, located at 1015 S. Willow Street in Effingham, Illinois, is the premier provider of pest control services to home and business owners who rely on Arab to provide year-round protection for the safety and protection of their investment. In business almost 100 years, since 1929, Arab Termite & Pest Control boasts thousands of satisfied customers as the foundation of their business.

Over 40 years ago, Eric Ruesken started working for Arab in Effingham. In 2005, after 20+ years of service with Arab, Eric and his wife Becky purchased the Effingham location of Arab Termite & Pest Control. Their determination and business savvy helped mold Arab into the household pest service company it is today and took the company from four employees in 2005 to the current 15 employees that include 11 Pest Technicians and 4 Administrative employees who provide service to a 100-mile radius that includes 19 counties from Effingham to Tuscola to the north and Mt. Vernon to the south, Highland to the west and the Indiana border to the east.

Effective **January 1, 2025**, Travis and Danyelle Kessler purchased Arab Termite & Pest Control from Eric Ruesken, pledging to grow this company as they continue the great morals, values and friendly service that customers have come accustomed to. With Travis' 12 years of Technician experience with Arab, along with a combined staff total of **100 years** of experience (including two employees with over 25 years each), Arab strives to not only be a knowledgeable company but also a company where employees make this a career and become like family.

The staff at Arab Termite & Pest Control take pride in customer service with quick response and treatment time. Customers can go online to www.arab-effingham.com to request a quote, message us, use our Pest Library to help identify those pesky

pests and even pay your bill online. We are proud of our numerous People's Choice awards, having been named the Winner for several years in a row in the category of **Best Pest Control**.

As Travis and Danyelle navigate the duties of new ownership, they wish Eric the best that retirement has to offer. They look forward to serving this wonderful community and continue to build professional relationships with everyone. Travis and Danyelle welcome you to stop by their office at **1015 S. Willow Street in Effingham from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday**. They also can be reached by phone at **217-342-5555** or by fax at **217-347-6666**.



New Owners - Travis & Danyelle Kessler

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Johnson Funeral Home

Johnson Funeral Home has been family owned and operated for six generations. Though there have been many advances through the years with traditional burial and cremation, one thing has stayed the same, their Mission. "Our mission remains to support each and every family with personalized care when their need is greatest," comments Patrick Johnson, current Funeral Director and sixth generation for Johnson Funeral Home.

As time has progressed, so has the frequency of choosing cremation versus traditional burial. "One conversation can provide peace of mind for loved ones that their final arrangements will be carried out in a way that they had hoped," informs Johnson. Pre-Planning your final arrangements is a topic not many want to discuss, but it becomes an act

of love for your family. Pre-Planning decreases emotional distress and unexpected finances during a great time of sorrow. Choose to pre-plan your final arrangements today with Maddie, our certified Pre-Planning



Coordinator. The process is intended to be easy and stress-free so you're not leaving this burden for those you care about most.

We would like to extend a special thanks to the community of Effingham. Not only do we believe Effingham is a tremendous place to live, shop, work, and raise a family, but we are grateful for the continued support over the last 155 years.

Staff:

Patrick Johnson: Funeral Director and Embalmer

Anna Johnson: Owner / Business Manager

Donald Johnson: Owner / Funeral Director and Embalmer, Retired

Maddie Johnson: Pre-Planning and Care Coordinator



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Pre-Planning Benefits Everyone. It provides peace of mind for you and your family and ensures your wishes will be met within budget.



Serving the Effingham community has been very rewarding. Most times it's families I've known my entire life since I grew up in Effingham. So it's a real honor to be able to serve those families and individuals.

- Patrick Johnson

website: johnsonandsonsfh.com

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John Wessel sits on the couch of the Shoe Inn after giving a tour.

Short-term rentals gaining popularity in Effingham County

Story and photos by Marie Adamick

When Haven on the Lake Airbnb owner Fran Thoele was 9, her parents were excited about the planned construction of Lake Sara. So they drove Thoele and her siblings to the area before it was filled with water and drove to the bottom of it.

“There were dusty roads because they’ve been doing things to get ready to flood Lake Sara,” said Thoele, now 76. “They thought it was so important that we get out here and see this lake, because it was going to be such a bonus for the Effingham area.”

Once the lake was complete, her parents took them to the beach, which was full of people and fun activities.

Today Thoele owns Haven on the Lake, an Airbnb that allows others to enjoy the tranquility and beauty of one of the area’s most prized attractions.

“This Airbnb gives them a chance to be a lake resident for a week in the summertime and have their kids do all the lake activities,” she said.

Teutopolis rentals

Besides Haven on the Lake, which opened in 2022, Thoele also owns Haven on Oak in Teutopolis, which opened in 2019.

Teutopolis currently has seven Airbnbs, including Thoele’s. Although they existed before, the village began regulating Airbnbs in March 2024. Operators must obtain a free permit from the Village, which is valid for one year.

Before that ordinance, village trustees were concerned that their growing number would negatively impact the housing market. But because they could help boost business in the village, officials passed an ordinance that sets guidelines – such as setting a maximum of 20 such short-term rentals within the village at one time.

The Lake Sara area has allowed short-term rentals like Airbnbs since October 2020. Operators need a license, which lasts for one year and costs \$750 annually.

Teutopolis recently asked residents and frequent visitors for their opinions on the village in its 2025 Comprehensive Plan survey. One of the questions asked respondents if they thought that having up to 20 short-term rentals is appropriate.

Local Airbnb owners say they boost the local economy. However, opinions vary.

As a lifelong resident of Teutopolis, Thoele was inspired to start her own Airbnbs because she believes they’re a wonderful place to visit, especially with family. She enjoys meeting new people, the stories they tell her and the reviews telling her about the fun times they had.

The guests

“You meet great people, and you give them a great place to visit and connect,” said Thoele, who recommends local markets, activities and restaurants to each of her visitors. She has copies of local restaurants’ menus in a welcome binder she shares with each guest.

Over the last two years, she’s had a gentleman from Amsterdam book Haven on the Lake for a week in the summers, and he’s booked it again for this year.

Thoele isn’t the only Airbnb owner who has had international guests.

Janice and John Wessel, both 63, run Teutopolis’ Shoe Inn Airbnb, where they’ve had guests from Italy and all over the country stay. Located around the corner from their bar, The Shoebox, the Wessels started their Airbnb in 2020 during the Covid pandemic because they saw how busy other

Airbnbs were in town.

“Things were shutting down, and we decided, ‘Hey, it’s time to move in while we had time to renovate this part of the building,’ and decided to go with the Airbnb,” said John. “It’s been working out pretty good.”

They were surprised when they started having more travelers stay with them from the interstate than people in town for events at the Teutopolis Banquet Hall just down the road from them.

“There’s visiting nurses. There’s people that come from busi-

Right, the kitchen and spiral staircase in the Wooden Shoe Factory. Below, Fran Thoele goes through the guest binder with different local restaurants’ menus.



ness-related things and parties, and we just got local people that have friends and family coming, and they stay for a day or two,” said John. “It’s not meant for a long-term stay.”

Janice and John explained that there’s not a lot of space for luggage. And there’s no range hood, so people can’t properly cook in there.

The Wessels also enjoy meeting the people and hearing their stories. They have a yellow journal in the room for guests to write in, whether it’s feedback, stories or drawings.

“We had a couple who came in and got engaged and bought an engagement ring from Weber’s,” said Janice, referring to Weber’s Jewelry in Teutopolis.

The Wessels also provide guests with local restaurant menus and inform them of local activities and events, such as festivals and the Santa Stomp, an annual run/walk race in December at Teutopolis

Banquet Hall to raise money for the Land of Lincoln Honor Flight.

Janice says they have Santa Stomp runners stay in their Airbnb, and they’ve even had the same woman stay with them for it during the past few years.

Along with the stories, John also enjoys seeing the five-star reviews they receive and people’s comments.

“If they’re offering a five-star review, then you’ve done something good,” said John. “We’re pretty proud of that.”

Leo Kitten, another host in Teutopolis, has four Airbnbs guests can stay in. One is a log cabin; one is an RV. The other two are historically significant to the Village of Teutopolis. The Wooden Shoe Haus and the Wooden Shoe Factory are two Airbnbs Kitten runs that were built by and used by 1800s bricklayer and wooden shoe maker Gerhard “George” Deymann.

Deymann sold the factory to Kitten’s grandmother in 1939, who plastered the walls and put a ceiling in it. But once Kitten renovated it into an Airbnb, he cut out half of the ceiling to make a sort of loft with an extra bed.

“It’s a little bit special,” said Kitten. “It brings people in.”

Kitten has been hosting Airbnbs for seven years. His first one was the Wooden Shoe Factory. Like Thoele and the Wessels, Kitten has also hosted international guests from Ireland, Germany and England.

“The big thing is Interstate 70, and then also 57 travel nearby,” said Kitten. “If we didn’t have that, you wouldn’t have half the people being here.”

Kitten estimates about half of his guests are in town visiting family, and he puts flyers out for local restaurants and businesses, such as the Monastery Museum and the Kountry Kitchen.

“We’ve had over 1,000 guests in there now, in our places, and we’ve maybe had one or two bad ones out of a thousand,” said Kitten. “By bad, I mean they left it a mess or something like that. They didn’t destroy anything or anything like that.”

He believes Airbnbs and other short-term rentals will stick around in Teutopolis because he’s attended several village board meetings in

Above, Leo Kitten pointing out a historical photo on the mantel of the fireplace in the Wooden Shoe Factory. Below, the kitchen in the Wooden Shoe Haus.



which the trustees said there hasn't been any complaints about them. Teutopolis Village President David Repking said he has not heard any complaints.

Becky Olson, one of Kitten's regulars, travels to Teutopolis for work and has been staying in his Airbnbs since August 2023. She highly prefers them over hotels because, depending on the Airbnb, she can rent whole houses for the price of a hotel room, she has a full kitchen to cook in and there's washers and dryers.

She explained how Kitten has been accommodating to her, and he makes sure she always has somewhere to stay.

"He's really the only person I know. I know the landowners that I'm working with in Jasper County, but I wouldn't ask them for anything," said Olson. "So if I've needed something, I can ask him, and he's been great. He's loaned me stuff for work purposes or whatever because I needed some things... and he's been absolutely great with that stuff."

Currently, the XCHNG is the City of Effingham's only Airbnb. Located on the second floor of The Wheat Penny, Michael Brummer has rented out the four units since March 2021.

"We are providing a unique stay experience for people that don't currently live in Effingham, and we love watching as they come from around the world and fall in love with our town and the people," said Brummer. "We bring in people, and they get to experience everything that is unique about our robust and historic downtown with its beauty, food, drink and shopping scene."

Opinions vary

Teutopolis native Brandon Pals, 31, wrote a Letter to the Editor of the Effingham Daily News about Airbnbs in Teutopolis after he came home from college in Washington D.C. for Christmas. His letter addresses Airbnbs in residential neighborhoods.

"They are neighborhood disruptors in so many ways," Pals wrote. "Cities throughout the country have been banning them. Investors take advantage of quiet and safe neighborhoods and turn residential properties into short-term rentals for profit. Instead of families moving in, you have a new neighbor every week. That isn't healthy."

Pals explained in an interview how he's only opposed to Airbnbs in residential houses that were designed for families, like those who are retired or have kids.

"When a house is turned into a short-term rental, I think it is wrong and should be sold to a family," said Pals. "The person that lives next door did not buy their house because they're going to have a new neighbor every single week."

Pals said he's supportive of Airbnbs that aren't in residential neighborhoods.

"It's also potentially a house that does not get sold to someone because now it becomes profitable with more ideal renters," said Pals. "I'm opposed to T-Town being for profit."

Village President Repking said the question on the 2025 Comprehensive Plan survey was included to determine how the residents feel about them, even though he hasn't heard any complaints so far.

Lake Sara Superintendent Mike Dirks believes Airbnbs around Lake Sara are both good and bad, but personally doesn't have many issues with them. He recognizes that out-of-town visitors enjoy the lake, and those that rent their houses out enjoy doing it. However, the ordinance is there for a reason: a few neighbors had issues with others renting out their properties and wanted it to be regulated, and thus, the ordinance was created.

Effingham City Mayor Mike Schutzbach hasn't heard any complaints about Airbnbs in the city and thinks they're a good asset. Similar to Pals, he believes the location is vital because people invest lots of money into their house, he says, and should be able to live in peace in their neighborhood.

"As long as they're conducted under good management, an involved owner that knows the importance of our community values, I think they're an excellent option, as long as they're in the right location," said Schutzbach. "Folks, taxpayers have the right to a peaceful living and not necessarily needing transit coming in and out of the neighborhood nightly."

The living room and kitchen area of one of the XCHNG Airbnbs.





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Diagnostic Imaging	Suite 102
Laboratory Services	Suite 101
Physical & Occupational Therapy	Suite 103
Walk-In Clinic	Suite 100
Weight Management	Suite 100
– Doug Kabbes, MD	

SECOND FLOOR

Cardiology	Suite 201
– Cory Hess, APRN	
– Monica Scott, APRN	
Effingham Medical Clinic	Suite 202
– Katie Klosterman, MD	
– Megan Steffen, APRN	
Endocrinology	Suite 202
– Hannah Dukeman, APRN	
Internal Medicine	Suite 200
– Louis Schwing, MD	
Interventional Pain Management	Suite 201
– Lynn Potter, APRN	
Neurology	Suite 202
– Leah Teichmiller, PA-C	
Occupational Medicine	Suite 200
– Stacia Dennison, APRN	
– Jennifer Hess, APRN	
– Louis Schwing, MD	
– Nick Watkins, PA-C	
– Lucas Zumbahlen, APRN	
Orthopedics	Suite 200
– Joseph Ajdinovich, MD	
– Andy Bays, MD	
– Peter Bonutti, MD	
– Stacia Dennison, APRN	
– Timothy Gray, MD	
– Evan Hakman, PA-C	
– Jennifer Hess, APRN	
– Frank Lee, MD	
– Didi Omiyi, MD	
– Nick Watkins, PA-C	
– Nick Williams, PA-C	
Pediatrics	Suite 203
– Cari Fearday, PA-C	
– Abby Welsh, MD	



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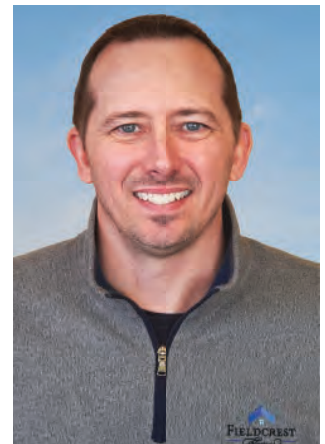
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eliminating the need to make appointments for basic services.



In 2023, they added Bintelli street-legal golf carts to their lineup, as Effingham & surrounding communities adopted using them. Available in both 4 seat & 6 seat models & a wide variety of colors, these carts make for a versatile option to get around town. GoecknerCarts.com has more info on the carts.

Every September, Goeckner Bros. hosts a Mopar Muscle Night Car Show. We love seeing what turns out every year! Check our Facebook page for more event info.



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We invite you to take the day off - or better yet, take the whole weekend - and discover what makes this Midwestern getaway so irresistible to travelers from all walks of life. Our community is a haven for those looking to 'fill their cup' - both in the metaphorical sense and the literal.

Nourish your body (and soul) at our farm to table restaurant, Firefly Grill...
Enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime show at the Effingham Performance Center...
Learn about local art in Downtown Effingham.

Take home a bottle of your newest guilty pleasure at Tuscan Hills Winery.
Go ahead, 'fill your cup' and let it 'runneth over'.

Explore, recharge or reconnect! However you decide to experience Effingham, we encourage you to soak up the people, the places and the experiences that set us apart.

For more information, or to view our Calendar of Events, visit www.visiteffinghamil.com or call 1-800-772-0750 to request a free Visitors Guide.

Property Transfers



EFFINGHAM COUNTY PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 656 property transfers recorded in Effingham County in 2024, which totaled \$151,004,640. Although acreage is not listed on every sale, the total that was listed came to 3,351.65 acres. In 2023, there were 718 property transfers, which totaled \$180,856,782.

The top 50 sales by price in 2024 totaled \$50,331,736 and encompassed 1,290.1 acres. They are listed below in descending order by sales price.

Address: 904 W. Temple Ave., Effingham

Price: \$5,800,000
Seller: Effingham Medical Properties, Ltd.
Buyer: Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center
Acres: 3.3
Date recorded: 3-14-24

Address: E. 1600th Ave., Altamont (Number not listed)

Price: \$4,170,206
Seller: The Huelskoetter Farm Trust
Buyer: Wendte Farms Ltd
Acres: 155.5
Date recorded: 1-19-24

Address: S. Raney St., Effingham (Number not listed)

Price: \$1,780,000
Seller: Thomas J. Haarmann,

Bernard J. Haarmann, Sharon L. Wente, Elaine A. Dust, Chadwick Hahn, Corey A. Hahn, and Joni M. Lidy.
Buyer: Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc.
Acres: 18.1
Date recorded: 11-26-24

Address: Farmland, Effingham. (Address not listed)

Price: \$1,738,800
Seller: Jason Thoele, Co-Executor of the Estate of Donald J. Niebrugge, Deceased
Buyer: Mark J. Zerrusen
Acres: 30
Date recorded: 8-13-24

Address: 1509 Hampton Dr., Effingham

Price: \$1,725,000
Seller: Delta Hotel Property, LLC
Buyer: Reva Hospitality, Inc.
Acres: 4.4
Date recorded: 5-20-24

Address: 8386 E. Twin Oaks Dr., Effingham

Price: \$1,600,000
Seller: Clineff Family Trust
Buyer: SED Properties, LLC
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 2-6-24

Address: 21701 E. 1600th Ave., Teutopolis

Price: \$1,567,000
Seller: Tom Zerrusen
Buyer: Allen Niemeyer
Acres: 20
Date recorded: 8-26-24

Address: E. 1600th Ave., Teutopolis (Number not listed)

Price: \$1,544,000
Seller: Ralph L. Zerrusen Testamentary Trust, by Diane L. Lane, Trustee
Buyer: Allen B. Niemeyer
Acres: 80
Date recorded: 11-25-24

Address: E. 1800th Ave., Beecher City (Number not listed)

Price: \$1,286,000
Seller: Maxfield Family, Inc.
Buyer: Ginger D. Strauch Trust
Acres: 80
Date recorded: 7-22-24

Address: 14616 N. 6th Ave., Effingham

Price: \$1,257,500
Seller: David A. and Peggy J. Naff
Buyer: Lake Sara Vacation, LLC
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 11-12-24

Address: Farmland, Edgewood (Address not listed)

Price: \$1,216,000
Seller: Ashlee N. Smith
Buyer: Worman Family Land Trust
Acres: 80
Date recorded: 1-19-24

Address: 1610 N. Lakewood Dr., Effingham

Price: \$1,118,991
Seller: Effingham RE, LLC
Buyer: CTR Partnership, L.P., C/O Caretrust Reit, Inc.
Acres: 8
Date recorded: 12-13-24

Address: 7916 N. 400th St., Altamont

Price: \$1,100,000
Seller: Steven Blake Pattillo Tr
Buyer: Altamont Investments, LLC
Acres: 25
Date recorded: 8-14-25

Address: 10654 E. 800th Ave., Watson

Price: \$950,000
Seller: Lyle Alan Westfall
Buyer: Cory J. Westfall
Acres: 80
Date recorded: 1-29-24

Address: N. 500th St., Altamont (Number not listed)

Price: \$940,325
Seller: The Huelskotter Farm Trust

Buyer: Brandon Laue & Molly Laue
Acres: 106
Date recorded: 2-1-24

Address: 15560 N. 200th St., Beecher City
Price: \$872,000
Seller: Luann M. Cassiday
Buyer: Delbert L. Meier
Acres: 64.4
Date recorded: 12-18-24

Address: 3010 N. 3rd St., Effingham
Price: \$850,000
Seller: JMVH Properties, LLC
Buyer: Austin Walk Properties, LLC
Acres: 6
Date recorded: 6-5-24

Address: 1304 Newcomb Dr., Effingham
Price: \$795,000
Seller: Steven A. and Jacqueline M. Witges
Buyer: Braxton Miles and Abbey Lee Briscoe
Acres: 2
Date recorded: 3-7-24

Address: 602 E. Evergreen Ave., Effingham
Price: \$780,000
Seller: Dianne K. Merz
Buyer: Tricia Wegman
Acres: 3
Date recorded: 5-28-24

Address: E. 1600th Ave., Teutopolis (Number not listed)
Price: \$772,000
Seller: Alice Brenda Zerrusen Estate
Buyer: Andrew H. Mette
Acres: 40
Date recorded: 12-5-24

Address: 1114 Wenthe Dr., Effingham
Price: \$770,000
Seller: Estate of Diana Doedtman
Buyer: Gram Properties, LLC
Acres: 1
Date recorded: 6-27-24

Address: 17333 N. Deer Creek Dr., Effingham
Price: \$750,000
Seller: The Grahn Family Trust
Buyer: Christopher D. and Dana Eley
Acres: 1.4
Date recorded: 4-4-24

Address: 7348 E. US Hwy. 40, Altamont
Price: \$725,000
Seller: Phillip Miller and Melissa Miller
Buyer: James D. and Tami Devore
Acres: 16.8
Date recorded: 12-16-24

Address: 1600 W. Fayette Ave., Effingham
Price: \$725,000
Seller: Chrystals Enterprises, LLC
Buyer: Debolt Properties, LLC
Acres: 3.9
Date recorded: 5-6-24

Address: 8436 E. 875th Ave., Altamont
Price: \$720,000
Seller: Jason E. Fox
Buyer: Eric G. St. Pierre
Acres: 4.1
Date recorded: 11-21-24

Address: 606 Bent Tree Dr., Effingham
Price: \$712,500
Seller: Julie K. Richards, Trustee
Buyer: Eric J. & Lisa R. Light
Acres: 0.3
Date recorded: 12-10-24

Address: N. 1700th St., Mason (Number not listed)
Price: \$700,000
Seller: Co. Trustees
Buyer: Aaron M. Kincaid
Acres: 77.7
Date recorded: 12-4-24

Address: E. 100th Ave., Edgewood (Number not listed)
Price: \$667,000
Seller: Joseph & Mary Roedl
Buyer: Stanley and Kathleen Jansen
Acres: 58
Date recorded: 6-10-24

Address: 2308 Hoffman Dr., Effingham
Price: \$650,000
Seller: Ronald W. Zimmerman
Buyer: BHR Investments, LLC
Acres: 1
Date recorded: 3-18-24

Address: 14807 N. Meadowbrook Ct., Effingham
Price: \$650,000
Seller: Jane Edwards
Buyer: Gary N. Washburn

Acres: 1.5
Date recorded: 6-21-24

Address: 13225 Augusta National Dr., Effingham
Price: \$650,000
Seller: Keith W. Hartman
Buyer: James R. Killam, Jr.
Acres: 1.2
Date recorded: 10-8-24

Address: 16543 N. Briarwood Dr., Effingham
Price: \$640,000
Seller: John T. Worman, Trustee
Buyer: Christopher M. Cogar
Acres: 1.5
Date recorded: 2-14-24

Address: 20296 N. 1400th St., Effingham
Price: \$615,000
Seller: Ben Steffen
Buyer: Shane A. Steffen
Acres: 20
Date recorded: 9-9-24

Address: 15013 N. 17th Ave., Effingham
Price: \$612,000
Seller: Joseph Allan Trust
Buyer: Rivendell Properties, LLC
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 3-21-24

Address: Farmland, Edgewood (Address not listed)
Price: \$608,000
Seller: Ashlee N. Smith
Buyer: Jayme S. Schultheis
Revocable Trust
Acres: 40
Date recorded: 1-18-24

Address: N. 500th St., Altamont (Number not listed)
Price: \$600,000
Seller: Eldor and Dorothy Klitzing Family Trust
Buyer: Nathan T. Wendling Trust
Acres: 40
Date recorded: 3-28-24

Address: N. 500th St., Altamont (Number not listed)
Price: \$600,000
Seller: Eldor and Dorothy Klitzing Family Trust
Buyer: Kristen M. Savage
Acres: 40
Date recorded: 4-1-24

Address: 5904 E. 950th Ave., Altamont
Price: \$595,000
Seller: James D. and Tami L. Devore
Buyer: Marcus G. and Jaden R. Moomaw
Acres: 2
Date recorded: 12-13-24

Address: 14660 N. 7th Ave., Effingham
Price: \$579,500
Seller: Mary Ann Brooks Living Trust
Buyer: CBK Investments, LLC
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 9-11-24

Address: 14870 E. Dutch Ln., Effingham
Price: \$575,000
Seller: Michael and Linda Churchill
Buyer: Kyle & Alyssa Boose
Acres: 3.4
Date recorded: 12-18-24

Address: 1933 N. 200th St., St. Elmo
Price: \$569,500
Seller: Dale R. Strauch
Buyer: Corey Schlau
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 5-2-24

Address: E. 1100th Ave., Dieterich (Number not listed)
Price: \$565,714
Seller: James W. Niemerg
Buyer: Robert J. Niemerg
Acres: 37
Date recorded: 5-10-24

Address: N. 200th St., Altamont (Number not listed)
Price: \$560,000
Seller: David W. Bauer
Buyer: Eric Anthony Kollmann
Acres: 40
Date recorded: 10-28-24

Address: 17000 N. Deer Creek Dr., Effingham
Price: \$549,900
Seller: Margaret R. Meylor
Buyer: Kevin W. Lock
Acres: 0.5
Date recorded: 3-4-24

Address: E. 1400th Ave., Effingham (Number not listed)
Price: \$543,200
Seller: Margaret R. Miller Estate
Buyer: Tony Holste, ET AL
Acres: 40
Date recorded: 5-9-24



Address: Lincolnshire Ln., Effingham (Number not listed)

Price: \$512,500
Seller: Michael Frederick Sprinkle
Buyer: Larry Overbeck
Acres: 0.5
Date recorded: 9-16-24

Address: 15122 Lorton Rd., Effingham

Price: \$510,000
Seller: Jeffrey S. Mumma
Buyer: Scott Bechtel Trust and Lisa Bechtel Trust
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 2-23-24

Address: N. 700th St., Shumway (Number not listed)

Price: \$510,000
Seller: Jack A. Poff and Darlene C. Poff Joint Tenancy Trust
Buyer: David Lagerhausen

Acres: 10
Date recorded: 10-23-24

Address: N. 1600th St., Effingham (Number not listed)

Price: \$504,000
Seller: Linda Merle Descher
Buyer: TNH Properties, LLC
Acres: 42
Date recorded: 5-13-24

Address: 1308 Kollmeyer Ln., Effingham

Price: \$500,100
Seller: Jeffrey W. Phillips
Buyer: Mary M. Bubash
Acres: 0.6
Date recorded: 10-16-24

EFFINGHAM CITY PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 344 property transfers recorded in Effingham in 2024, which

totalled \$88,607,694. Although acreage is not listed on every sale, the total that was listed came to 694.7 acres. In 2023, there were 427 property transfers, which totalled \$129,440,976.

The top 10 sales by price in 2024 totalled \$17,445,291 and encompassed 74.8 acres. They are listed below in descending order by sales price.

Address: 904 W. Temple Ave.

Price: \$5,800,000
Seller: Effingham Medical Properties, Ltd.
Buyer: Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center
Acres: 3.3
Date recorded: 3-14-24

Address: S. Raney St. (Number not listed)

Price: \$1,780,000
Seller: Thomas J. Haarmann, Bernard J. Haarmann, Sharon

L. Wente, Elaine A. Dust, Chadwick Hahn, Corey A. Hahn, and Joni M. Lidy.
Buyer: Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc.
Acres: 18.1
Date recorded: 11-26-24

Address: Farmland (Address not listed)

Price: \$1,738,800
Seller: Jason Thoele, Co-Executor of the Estate of Donald J. Niebrugge, Deceased
Buyer: Mark J. Zerrusen
Acres: 30
Date recorded: 8-13-24

Address: 1509 Hampton Dr.

Price: \$1,725,000
Seller: Delta Hotel Property, LLC
Buyer: Reva Hospitality, Inc.
Acres: 4.4
Date recorded: 5-20-24

Address: 8386 E. Twin Oaks Dr.

Price: \$1,600,000
Seller: Clineff Family Trust
Buyer: SED Properties, LLC
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 2-6-24

Address: 14616 N. 6th Ave.

Price: \$1,257,500
Seller: David A. and Peggy J. Naff
Buyer: Lake Sara Vacation, LLC
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 11-12-24

Address: 1610 N. Lakewood Dr.

Price: \$1,118,991
Seller: Effingham RE, LLC
Buyer: CTR Partnership, L.P., C/O Caretrust Reit, Inc.
Acres: 8
Date recorded: 12-13-24

Address: 3010 N. 3rd St.

Price: \$850,000
Seller: JMVH Properties, LLC
Buyer: Austin Walk Properties, LLC
Acres: 6
Date recorded: 6-5-24

Address: 1304 Newcomb Dr.

Price: \$795,000
Seller: Steven A. and Jacqueline M. Witges
Buyer: Braxton Miles and Abbey Lee Briscoe
Acres: 2
Date recorded: 3-7-24

Address: 602 E. Evergreen Ave.

Price: \$780,000
 Seller: Dianne K. Merz
 Buyer: Tricia Wegman
 Acres: 3
 Date recorded: 5-28-24

ALTAMONT PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 77 property transfers in Altamont in 2024, which totaled \$19,278,525. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 429.4 acres. There were 68 transfers in 2023, totaling \$14,642,397.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Altamont in 2024, which totaled \$10,435,531.

**Address: E. 1600th Ave.
 (Number not listed)**

Price: \$4,170,206
 Seller: The Huelskoetter Farm Trust
 Buyer: Wendte Farms Ltd
 Acres: 155.5
 Date recorded: 1-19-24

Address: 7916 N. 400th St.

Price: \$1,100,000
 Seller: Steven Blake Pattillo Tr
 Buyer: Altamont Investments, LLC
 Acres: 25
 Date recorded: 8-14-24

**Address: N. 500th St.
 (Number not listed)**

Price: \$940,325
 Seller: The Huelskottter Farm Trust
 Buyer: Brandon Laue & Molly Laue
 Acres: 106
 Date recorded: 2-1-24

Address: 7348 E. US Hwy. 40

Price: \$725,000
 Seller: Phillip Miller and Melissa Miller
 Buyer: James D. and Tami Devore
 Acres: 16.8
 Date recorded: 12-16-24

Address: 8436 E. 875th Ave.

Price: \$720,000
 Seller: Jason E. Fox
 Buyer: Eric G. St. Pierre
 Acres: 4.1
 Date recorded: 11-21-24


**Address: N. 500th St.
 (Number not listed)**

Price: \$600,000
 Seller: Eldor & Dorothy Klitzing Family Trust
 Buyer: Nathan T. Wendling Trust
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 3-28-24

**Address: N. 500th St.
 (Number not listed)**

Price: \$600,000
 Seller: Eldor & Dorothy Klitzing Family Trust
 Buyer: Kristen M. Savage
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 4-1-24

Address: 5904 E. 950th Ave.

Price: \$595,000
 Seller: James D. & Tami L. Devore
 Buyer: Marcus G. & Jaden R. Moomaw
 Acres: 2
 Date recorded: 12-13-24

**Address: N. 200th St.
 (Number not listed)**

Price: \$560,000
 Seller: David W. Bauer
 Buyer: Eric Anthony Kollmann
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 10-28-24

Address: 807 Aker Dr.

Price: \$425,000
 Seller: Joseph G. Jahraus
 Buyer: Derek Schipper
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 10-24-24

BEECHER CITY PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 24 property transfers in Beecher City in 2024, which totaled \$4,045,750. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 200.9 acres. In 2023, there were 14 property transfers, which totaled \$1,053,500.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Beecher City in 2024, which totaled \$3,570,000.

**Address: E. 1800th Ave.
 (Number not listed)**

Price: \$1,286,000
 Seller: Maxfield Family, Inc.
 Buyer: Ginger D. Strauch Trust
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 7-22-24



Address: 15560 N. 200th St.
 Price: \$872,000
 Seller: Luann M. Cassiday
 Buyer: Delbert L. Meier
 Acres: 64.4
 Date recorded: 12-18-24

Address: 19092 N. 225th St.
 Price: \$330,000
 Seller: Tana G. Compton
 Buyer: Tawn W. & Tammy L. Tipword
 Acres: 10
 Date recorded: 3-18-24

Address: 14648 N. 100th St.
 Price: \$220,000
 Seller: Brittany M. Lowery
 Buyer: Melinda Austin
 Acres: 3.7
 Date recorded: 6-3-24

Address: E. State Hwy. 33 (Number not listed)
 Price: \$204,000
 Seller: Maxfield Family, Inc.
 Buyer: Blake McKay
 Acres: 20
 Date recorded: 7-22-24

Address: 400 E. Vine St.
 Price: \$155,000

Seller: Kelsy M. Flowers
 Buyer: Brandy R. Schlanser
 Acres: 0.2
 Date recorded: 11-18-24

Address: 106 N. Myrtle St.
 Price: \$142,000
 Seller: Brooke Elaine Buzzard
 Buyer: Cody J. Brown
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 5-2-24

Address: 204 N. Jennings St.
 Price: \$140,000
 Seller: Charles R. Robison
 Buyer: Ethan Robison
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 12-18-24

Address: 121 E. 1600th Ave.
 Price: \$130,000
 Seller: Juan Carlos Jacinto
 Buyer: Evan Cornett
 Acres: 3
 Date recorded: 6-13-24

Address: 100 S. James St.
 Price: \$91,000
 Seller: Julie A. McAdams
 Buyer: Brian Carruthers
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 1-23-24

DIETERICH PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 45 property transfers in Dieterich in 2024, which totaled \$8,394,934. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 457.25 acres. In 2023, there were 46 transfers, which came to \$8,789,166.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Dieterich in 2024, which totaled \$3,822,464.

Address: E. 1100th Ave. (Number not listed)
 Price: \$565,714
 Seller: James W. Niemerg
 Buyer: Robert J. Niemerg
 Acres: 37
 Date recorded: 5-10-24

Address: 20803 E. 500th Ave.
 Price: \$410,000
 Seller: Betty J. Emmerich
 Buyer: Brummer, LLC
 Acres: 3.2
 Date recorded: 10-3-24

Address: E. 200th Ave & N. 1700th St. (Number not listed)
 Price: \$400,000
 Seller: Sue Ann Naab Reilly
 Buyer: Wendte Farms, LTD.
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 3-1-24

Address: Lucas Township (Address not listed)
 Price: \$384,000
 Seller: Cody Dean Gerth
 Buyer: The 2020 Randee J. Bethards Irrevocable Trust
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 2-17-24

Address: Lucas Township (Address not listed)
 Price: \$360,000
 Seller: Estate of Phyllis Joy Phillips
 Buyer: Cody & Leslie Gerth
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 2-24-24

Address: E. 900th Ave. (Number not listed)
 Price: \$358,750
 Seller: G&H Properties, LLC
 Buyer: Paul Willenborg
 Acres: 20.5
 Date recorded: 1-30-24

Address: 103 N. Roman Dr.
 Price: \$355,000
 Seller: Jeff A. Hartke
 Buyer: Jay H. Teeman
 Acres: 0.4
 Date recorded: 3-26-24

Address: 208 Hawthorn Ave.
 Price: \$339,000
 Seller: John Nava-Sifuentes
 Buyer: Jon A. Sills
 Acres: 0.4
 Date recorded: 7-3-24

Address: 314 Liberty Dr.
 Price: \$335,000
 Seller: Gregory A. Niebrugge
 Buyer: Steffen P. Miller
 Acres: 0.4
 Date recorded: 12-11-24

Address: 203 Waldhoff Ave.
 Price: \$315,000
 Seller: William James Hart
 Buyer: Ross J. Koester
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 7-5-24

EDGEWOOD PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 16 property transfers in Edgewood in 2024, which totaled \$3,546,140. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 193.5 acres. In the 2023 there were 14 transfers, which totaled \$1,404,516.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Edgewood in 2024, which totaled \$3,476,340.

Address: Farmland (Address not listed)
 Price: \$1,216,000
 Seller: Ashlee N. Smith
 Buyer: Worman Family Land Trust Dated December 28, 2006
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 1-19-24

Address: E. 100th Ave. (Number not listed)
 Price: \$667,000
 Seller: Joseph and Mary Roedl
 Buyer: Stanley and Kathleen Jansen
 Acres: 58
 Date recorded: 6-10-24

Address: Farmland (Address not listed)
 Price: \$608,000





Seller: Ashlee N. Smith
 Buyer: Jayme S. Schultheis
 Revocable Trust
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 1-18-24

Address: 806 S. 5th St.
 Price: \$226,000
 Seller: Kylee J. Whitehurst
 Buyer: Richard M. Donovan
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 12-26-24

Address: 1004 Lynn Dr.
 Price: \$218,000
 Seller: Thomas R. Nuxoll
 Buyer: Jenna Probst
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 9-4-24

Address: 910 N. Merchant St.
 Price: \$160,000
 Seller: Dennis W. Worman
 (POA)
 Buyer: Amy Friemuth

Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 12-26-24

Address: 31 Rt. 37
 Price: \$158,340
 Seller: Earnie E. Simmons
 Buyer: Stanley L. Jansen
 Acres: 15
 Date recorded: 6-6-24

Address: 800 Ash St.
 Price: \$105,000
 Seller: Tim A. Rush
 Buyer: Ethan A. McWhorter
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 9-5-24

Address: 803 Broad St.
 Price: \$70,000
 Seller: Patrick D. Watwood
 Buyer: Shari Hall
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 1-25-24

Address: 911 Ash St.
 Price: \$48,000
 Seller: Robert Ryan Depoister
 Buyer: Maria Virgie Manfred
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 2-12-24

MASON PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 28 property transfers in Mason in 2024, which totaled \$5,648,194. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 393.9 acres. In 2023, there were 35 property transfers, which totaled \$7,121,306.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Mason in 2024, which totaled \$3,886,999:

Address: N. 1700th St.
(Number not listed)
 Price: \$700,000
 Seller: Co. Trustees
 Buyer: Aaron M. Kincaid
 Acres: 77.7
 Date recorded: 12-4-24

Address: 347 N. 1200th St.
 Price: \$490,000
 Seller: Linda Faye Court
 Buyer: James C. Morgan
 Acres: 16
 Date recorded: 9-3-24

Address: E. 400th Ave.
(Number not listed)
 Price: \$429,486
 Seller: Trustee of The Claudine M. Rush Revocable Living Trust
 Buyer: Peter and Brenda Jansen
 Acres: 41
 Date recorded: 5-20-24





Address: E. 400th Ave.
(Number not listed)
 Price: \$416,178
 Seller: Trustee of The Claudine M. Rush Revocable Living Trust
 Buyer: Trustees of The Patilynn Jansen Living Trust
 Acres: 41
 Date recorded: 5-20-24

Address: 11800 E. 400th Ave.
 Price: \$350,000
 Seller: Barbara Barnes

Buyer: Trenton M. and Kristen N. Kreke
 Acres: 9
 Date recorded: 1-29-24

Address: 4545 N. 950th St.
 Price: \$346,620
 Seller: Melvin G. Haarmann
 Buyer: Stock & Co., LLC
 Acres: 17.3
 Date recorded: 5-3-24

Address: 5120 N. 350th St.
 Price: \$318,000

Seller: Nathan E. Mellendorf
 Buyer: Jordan McGinnis
 Acres: 1
 Date recorded: 4-23-24

Address: E. 400th Ave.
(Number not listed)

Price: \$295,479
 Seller: Trustee of the Claudine M. Rush Revocable Living Trust
 Buyer: Kevin H. and Misty S. Niebrugge
 Acres: 42
 Date recorded: 4-24-24

Address: E. 400th Ave.
(Number not listed)

Price: \$291,236
 Seller: Trustee of The Claudine M. Rush Revocable Living Trust
 Buyer: David and Sharon Mahon
 Acres: 32
 Date recorded: 5-13-24

Address: 5205 N. 800th St.

Price: \$250,000
 Seller: Shawn L. Wharton
 Buyer: Braeden C. Quandt
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 6-19-24

MONTROSE PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 10 property transfers in Montrose in 2024, which totaled \$518,100. In 2023, there were 14 property transfers, which totaled \$2,412,346.

Here are the 10 property transfers in Montrose in 2024:

Address: 409 E. National Rd.

Price: \$180,000
 Seller: Randy Goebel
 Buyer: Moe Investments, LLC
 Acres: 0.8
 Date recorded: 6-13-24

Address: 317 S. Maple St.

Price: \$180,000
 Seller: Chad T. Mette
 Buyer: Joshua A. Flood
 Acres: 0.6
 Date recorded: 8-6-24

Address: 121 W. Oak Ave.

Price: \$88,600
 Seller: Cleeton Properties, LLC
 Buyer: Angela Artola
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 7-17-24

Address: 127 W. Mead Ave.

Price: \$20,000
 Seller: James L. Hildebrand
 Buyer: Scott A. Mellendorf
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 12-2-24

Address: 208 S. Boyd St.

Price: \$14,000
 Seller: Jon Engelbart
 Buyer: Charles R. Robison
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 12-18-24

Address: 401 Hwy View Ave.

Price: \$10,000
 Seller: Joshua S. Vaughan
 Buyer: EJ Water Cooperative, Inc.
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 2-5-24

Address: W. Oak Ave.
(Number not listed)

Price: \$7,500
 Seller: JMVH Properties, LLC
 Buyer: David E. Campbell
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 8-20-24

Address: W. Prairie Ave.
(Number not listed)

Price: \$6,500
 Seller: Village of Montrose
 Buyer: Howard Will
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 8-20-24

Address: W. Prairie Ave.
(Number not listed)

Price: \$6,500
 Seller: Village of Montrose
 Buyer: Howard Will
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 8-21-24

Address: W. Prairie Ave. 2nd East of Maple St. (Number not listed)

Price: \$5,000
 Seller: George W. Sehi, Jr.
 Buyer: Edward and Deborah McClellan
 Acres: 0.3
 Date recorded: 7-3-24

SHUMWAY PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 13 property transfers in Shumway in 2024, which totaled \$2,581,932. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 54.6 acres. In



2023 there were 14 property transfers, which totaled \$2,247,302.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Shumway in 2024, which totaled \$2,549,732:

Address: N. 700th St. (Number not listed)
 Price: \$510,000
 Seller: Jack A. Poff and Darlene C. Poff Joint Tenancy Trust
 Buyer: David Lagerhausen
 Acres: 10
 Date recorded: 10-23-24

Address: E. 1700th Ave. (Number not listed)
 Price: \$421,232
 Seller: Marita C. Kemme
 Buyer: Matthew H. Kemme
 Acres: 31.6
 Date recorded: 10-17-24

Address: 9807 E. 1735th Ave.
 Price: \$330,000
 Seller: Charles G. Suttle, Jr.
 Buyer: Thomas L. and Donna J. Vannier
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 4-26-24

Address: 9980 E. 1700th Ave.
 Price: \$328,000
 Seller: Harold W. Young
 Buyer: Samuel L. McCammon
 Acres: 3
 Date recorded: 9-4-24

Address: 9896 E. 1700th Ave.
 Price: \$220,000
 Seller: Mary Lou Sams
 Buyer: Haley S. Dust
 Acres: 3
 Date recorded: 3-7-24

Address: 8908 E. State Hwy. 33
 Price: \$193,500
 Seller: Travis D. Tucker
 Buyer: James R. Prather
 Acres: 1
 Date recorded: 2-12-24

Address: 9160 E. 1900th Ave.
 Price: \$180,000
 Seller: Ronald E. Kelly, Ryman E. Kelly and Dee Newton a/k/a Darthamae Newton
 Buyer: Randall Kelly and Elizabeth Kelly
 Acres: 3
 Date recorded: 2-17-24



Address: 208 W. Madison St.
 Price: \$130,000
 Seller: David and Donna Parks
 Buyer: Nicole Miller
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 7-9-24

Address: 20901 N. State Hwy. 32
 Price: \$127,000
 Seller: Daniel J. Hackman
 Buyer: Chelsey N. Wilkins
 Acres: 1
 Date recorded: 5-14-24

Address: 16224 N. 700th St.
 Price: \$110,000
 Seller: Daniel J. Bolin as Co-Trustee of the Bolin Trust
 Buyer: Darren Klepzig
 Acres: 2
 Date recorded: 1-8-24

TEUTOPOLIS PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 66 property transfers in Teutopolis in 2024, which totaled \$12,605,246. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 260.1 acres.

In 2023, there were 64 property transfers, which totaled \$11,462,173.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Teutopolis in 2024, which totaled \$6,599,200.

Address: 21701 E. 1600th Ave.
 Price: \$1,567,000
 Seller: Tom Zerrusen
 Buyer: Allen Niemeyer
 Acres: 20
 Date recorded: 8-26-24

Address: E. 1600th Ave. (Number not listed)
 Price: \$1,544,000
 Seller: Ralph L. Zerrusen Testamentary Trust, by Diane L. Lane, Trustee
 Buyer: Allen B. Niemeyer
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 11-25-24

Address: E. 1600th Ave. (Number not listed)
 Price: \$772,000
 Seller: Alice Brenda Zerrusen Estate
 Buyer: Andrew H. Mette
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 12-5-24



Address: E. 1600th Ave.
(Number not listed)
Price: \$430,000
Seller: Mary E. Heiss
Buyer: Leon D. Haack Trust
Acres: 20
Date recorded: 8-26-24

Address: 14565 N. 1600th St.
Price: \$425,000
Seller: Carol S. Sheehan
Buyer: Hunter L. Jurgens
Acres: 8.1
Date recorded: 9-18-24

Address: 4 Blue Jay Dr.
Price: \$410,000
Seller: David Downs
Buyer: Jeremy and Michelle Niebrugge
Acres: 0.5
Date recorded: 3-1-24

Address: 209 Morning Glory Ln.
Price: \$390,000
Seller: Belle Maison Homes, LLC
Buyer: Charles J. Stuckey
Acres: 0.5
Date recorded: 4-23-24

Address: 709 S. Oak St.
Price: \$387,200
Seller: Gebben Construction, LLC
Buyer: Linda M. Workman
Acres: 0.5
Date recorded: 9-13-24

Address: 17017 E. 1700th Ave.
Price: \$349,000
Seller: Estate of Randall B. Funneman
Buyer: Claire Hemmen
Acres: 5
Date recorded: 4-19-24

Address: 804 S. John St.
Price: \$325,000
Seller: Aaron L. Hoelscher
Buyer: Steven A. & Jacqueline M. Witges
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 1-18-24

WATSON PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 28 property transfers in Watson in 2024, which totaled \$4,310,025. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 189.9 acres. In 2023, there were 19 property transfers, which totaled \$2,093,600.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Watson in 2024, which totaled \$3,171,125.

Address: 10654 E. 800th Ave.
Price: \$950,000
Seller: Lyle Alan Westfall
Buyer: Cory J. Westfall
Acres: 80
Date recorded: 1-29-24

Address: 106 Davis Dr.
Price: \$470,000
Seller: Travis Hendrix
Buyer: Courtney Westendorf
Acres: 1
Date recorded: 7-9-24

Address: 9568 N. 1115th Rd.
Price: \$320,000
Seller: Julie Hoffman
Buyer: Cortney Moser
Acres: 5
Date recorded: 7-3-24

Address: 5890 N. US Hwy. 45
Price: \$296,000
Seller: Sharon K. Woodland
Buyer: Vincent P. Wendt
Acres: 7
Date recorded: 8-29-24

Address: 5118 N. 1350th St.
Price: \$275,000
Seller: Jonathan B. and Kathrine B. Orth
Buyer: First Presbyterian Church
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 8-8-24

Address: 10675 E. 850th Ave.
Price: \$275,000
Seller: The Jim A. & Peggy S. Strange Revocable Trust
Buyer: Galen Nelson
Acres: 2.5
Date recorded: 11-18-24

Address: 403 W. Main St.
Price: \$165,000
Seller: Devon M. Guerrattaz
Buyer: Cody & Holly Thacker
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 9-17-24

Address: 124 N. West St.
Price: \$145,625
Seller: Tommi A. Warfield
Buyer: Dale Spindler
Acres: 5
Date recorded: 12-11-24

Address: 220 S. East St.
Price: \$145,000
Seller: Richard D. and Sarah J. Short
Buyer: Richard & Virginia Rogers
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 4-17-24

Address: 202 N. Maple St.
Price: \$129,500
Seller: Jeremy McBride
Buyer: Sara E. Mathis
Acres: Not listed
Date recorded: 9-19-24



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Vanessa Skavlem
Owner/Managing Broker
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1939
Joseph Kabbes,
founder

1955 to 1990
**Ray Kabbes &
George Mette,**
Co-Owners

1990 to 2015
**John, Bill, Dick &
Bob Mette,**
Co-Owners

2015 to 2022
Bill & Dick Mette,
Co-Owners

2022 to Present
Bill & Caleb Mette,
Co-Owners



**Co-Owners
Bill & Caleb Mette**



Effingham Builder's Supply is a leader in customer satisfaction, serving the residential builder or remodeler as well as the commercial contractor and architect. Visit our showroom to see first-hand why we say, "Quality Backed with Service." We know our products and service what we sell.

Our knowledgeable and experienced staff can help you with home planning and drafting, kitchen designing, material take-off and estimates, and more. We have custom wood and metal shops on site.

We offer quality building materials at reasonable prices and will enhance those products with a variety of services such as consulting, designing, drafting, fabricating, financing, scheduling, training, product knowledge, specialized delivery, computer technology and warranty support.

We strive to offer real value to the builders, developers and homeowners of the greater Effingham County area. Customer satisfaction has been the key to our long-term growth. We started our business in 1939 on a firm foundation and 85 years later, we continue to offer the same top quality service and products you have come to expect from us.



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PROGRESS AND INNOVATION IN EVERY BITE

Krusteaz has been a trusted name for generations, and for the past decade, our Effingham facility has been a hub of progress and innovation. Here, we produce Krusteaz Pancake Mixes, Gluten-Free Mixes, Batters, Red Lobster Frozen Biscuits, and more—all crafted with FIERCE pride.

In 2022, we rebranded from Continental Mills to The Krusteaz Company, embracing the future while honoring our legacy. Our FIERCE pride drives everything we do. As a company that is focused, innovative, entrepreneurial, responsive, collaborative, and energized, we continuously create products that bring convenience and joy to your kitchen.

FIERCE Progress Over the Past Several Years:

- **Rebranding Success:** A new name, the same trusted quality.
- **Innovation Hub:** In 2024, we launched Krusteaz Batters—ready-to-bake and the only product like it on the market—just one example of our groundbreaking developments, with more innovations ahead.
- **Workforce Growth:** Our team has grown nearly 250% since 2020.
- **Local Milestone:** In July 2024, we celebrated 10 years in Effingham with a community pancake breakfast and a special employee event.

At The Krusteaz Company, we take a forward-thinking approach to meet market demands and invest in the best employees. We're proud to be part of the Effingham community and grateful for your support over the past 10 years and for the future ahead.

Together, we're building a future of FIERCE progress and shared success!



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