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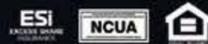
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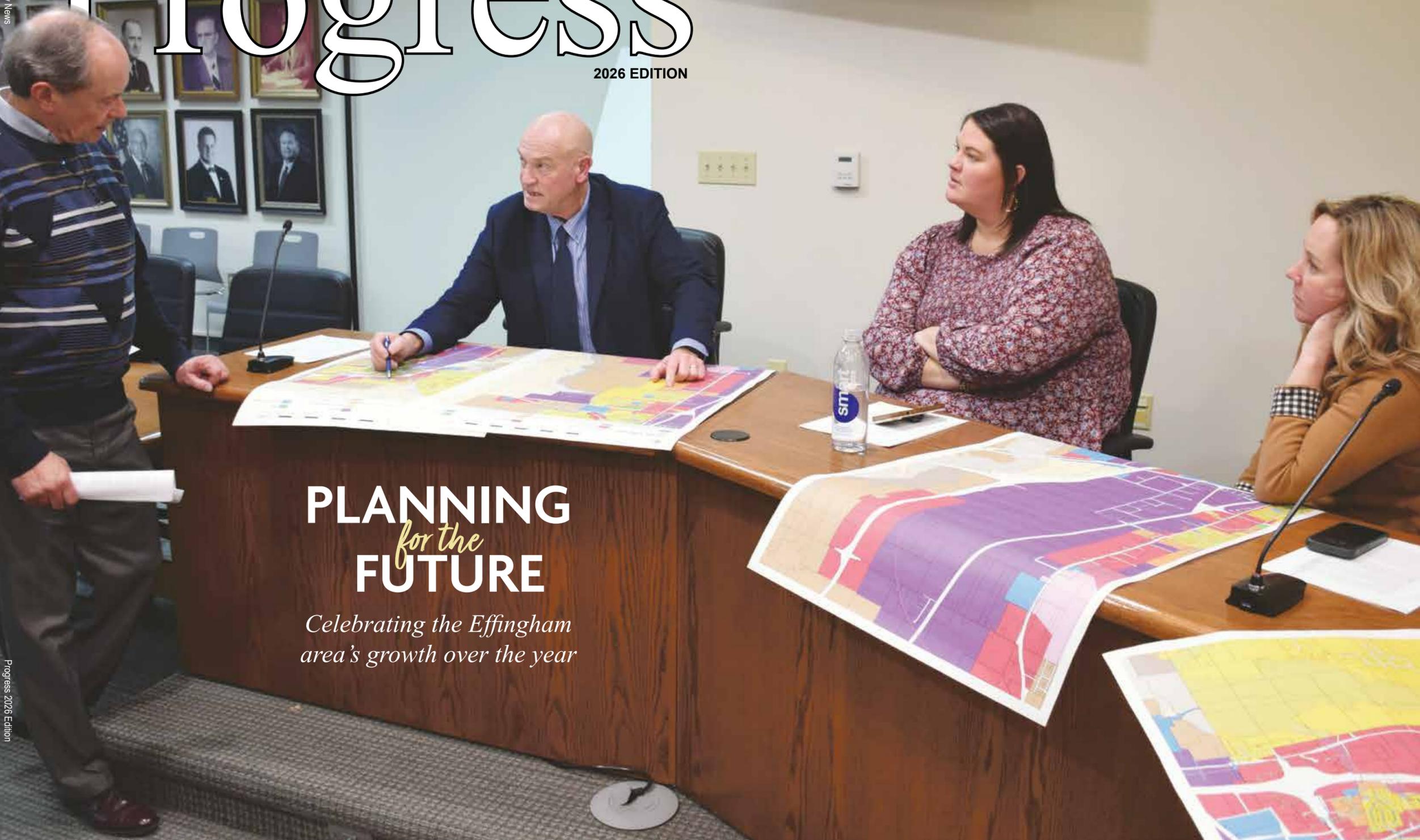
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Effingham Daily News

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2026 EDITION



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Progress 2026 Edition



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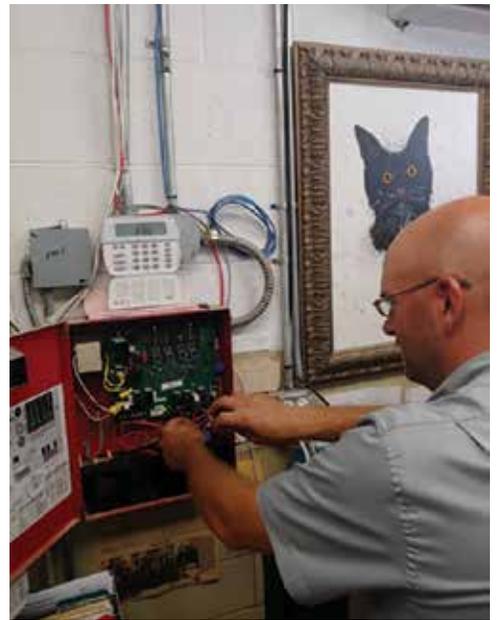
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- Honda Civic, Accord, CR-V and Passport give Honda more 2026 Car and Driver 10Best Awards than any other brand
- Honda Accord wins for a record 40th time, a streak of 28 consecutive years
- 2026 Passport makes list for first time, the 11th Honda model to earn the honor
- Honda Civic lineup wins for 4th year in a row with special praise for hybrid variant
- Honda CR-V and CR-V hybrid claim 4th straight 10Best Trucks and SUVs award
- Honda has won 98 10Best trophies since award's inception – most of any brand

Honda has won the 2026 "Best Car Brand" award for the fifth consecutive year from US News & World Report receiving high scores

for performance, interior quality, safety, and reliability for the Civic and Accord. The award-winning 11th generation Civic is a gateway to the Honda Brand and America's most popular vehicle with the Gen Z, first time buyers. Honda Civic is America's best compact car since 1973.

The 2026 Honda Passport has been honored with an "Adventure Vehicle of the Year" award by the editors of Gear Junkie. The rugged Passport and Passport Trail Sport earned top honors in the 2-row SUV category. The 2026 Passport earned the top safety pick rating, the highest safety accolade from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

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Back Row, left to right: Jason Payne, Doug Mette, Brian Koester, John Kortte, Matt Rogers, Paul Karrick, Mark Schmidt, DJ Dees and Mike Wilson.

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Progress

AN EFFINGHAM DAILY NEWS PUBLICATION

2026 EDITION

Feature **STORY**

Effingham Envisions 2050: The Comprehensive Plan



From bottom right going clockwise: Steering Committee Member Greg Sapp, Steering Committee Member Mel Stock, Steering Committee Member Dr. Ruben Boyajian, Steering Committee Member Sara Ruholl, Steering Committee Member Katie Koester, Steering Committee Member Kim Jansen, Chastain & Associates Urban Planner Stephanie Brown, Sightline Planning and Zoning Founding Principal Jacob Seid, City Planner Greg Koester and Steering Committee Member Andrew Grunloh meet during a Steering Committee Meeting at the end of March 2025 to discuss housing and the city's visions. Photo by Marie Adamick

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ON THE COVER

During a March 6, 2025 Focus Group meeting, steering committee members discuss zoning issues in Effingham. Pictured from left: Mel Stock, Jeff Speer, Katie Koester and Libby Moeller. Photo by Marie Adamick

From the EDITOR

Over the past year, the city of Effingham and the village of Teutopolis have been working on their comprehensive plans. We delve into those plans in the 2026 edition of Progress.



In Effingham, priorities include considering funding to create a full-time EMS position, planning for an overpass or underpass to the south side of the city, publishing marketing materials that highlight the existing transit options and how they work, and maintaining the Central Redevelopment Project Area TIF for rehabilitation opportunities.

Officials are also identifying opportunities to develop an Outer Belt East that will connect the area around the airport to provide access to the north area of the city, assisting the county

with airport capital improvements through providing funding when able and providing support for grant applications, and the extension of Ford Avenue with a connecting roundabout.

In a survey of Teutopolis residents to help develop the village's comprehensive plan, respondents said the village's strengths include: the appearance of the community, fire protection, law enforcement, roadway maintenance, parking options, street maintenance, appearance of housing, quality of education, safety of students at school, the availability of programs and services, park maintenance, park recreation facilities and more.

Respondents believe there are opportunities to improve in: traffic flow, designated truck routes, upgrading the Main Street and Pearl Street intersection, expanding sidewalks and ensuring

they are ADA compliant, recreation programs for both adults and senior citizens, using public funds, the ability to recruit and retain quality staff at the schools, affordable housing for purchase and rent, senior housing, long-term care facilities, bike lanes, drinking water quality, access to affordable childcare and more.

Elsewhere, we take a look at the new members that joined the Effingham County Chamber in 2025. We also take a look at the ribbon cuttings for new businesses. These are regular features in the Effingham Daily News. But it's always impressive to see them all in one place, here in our Progress magazine.

The Effingham Daily News also regularly publishes property transfers in Effingham County. It's become a yearly feature in Progress to list the top 10 sales in each of our communities and across the county. It's definitely a sign of progress to see such robust activity across our area.

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. 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.



Alex Wallner is the sports editor of the Effingham Daily News. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2016. Before joining the EDN, he was the sports editor at the Standard-Democrat in Sikeston, Missouri for three years. He resides in Effingham.



Marie Adamick is a general assignment 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 lives in Effingham and has family in Wisconsin, Cincinnati and St. Louis.



Effingham City Planner Greg Koester points to and discusses the city's Future Land Use map during the Jan. 22 meeting of the City Council, Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Steering Committee.

EFFINGHAM ENVISIONS 2050: The Comprehensive Plan

Story and photos by Marie Adamick

The City of Effingham recently completed its 2050 Comprehensive Plan: A foundational outline of the city's vision, goals and policies for long-term planning and development. City officials will use the plan to identify challenges, provide solutions and establish a process for organized growth. The previous Comprehensive Plan for the city was completed in 1995, with revisions having been made as-needed since then.

In early 2024, Chastain & Associates LLC Urban Planner Stephanie Brown and Sightline Planning and Zoning Founding Principal Jake Seid submitted a plan to the City of Effingham. After the city's approval of their plan, the duo launched a community feedback survey in the fall of 2024. The survey was available for residents and non-residents to share what they enjoy about the City of Effingham

and what improvements could be made. The survey received over 1,000 responses, representing about 10% of the city's population.

"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.

Effingham Mayor Mike Schutzbach appointed a number of community officials to serve on the Steering Committee to help

identify challenges in the community, provide solutions and establish a process for growth. Topics discussed during Steering Committee meetings and Focus Group meetings were housing, infrastructure, downtown, parking, public transportation, environmental factors, floodplains, emergency services, schools, recreation, senior citizens, Lake Sara, Heartville, recycling and the Future Land Use map.

Members of the Steering Committee were:

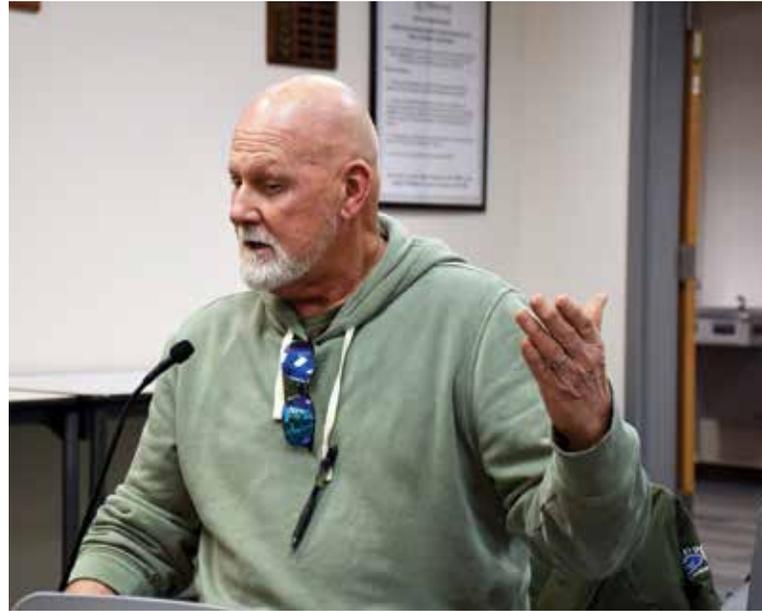
- » City of Effingham Plan Commission Chairman Brian Hayes
- » RE/MAX Realtor, Property Manager and Developer Jeff Speer
- » Effingham Park Board Executive Director Jeff Althoff
- » Effingham Unit 40 Schools Superintendent Andy Johnson
- » Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Katie Koester
- » Midland States Bank Market President Mel Stock
- » Premier Broadcasting Station Manager Greg Sapp
- » Retired Walmart Manager Bob Lakin
- » Effingham City Commissioner Libby Moeller
- » HSHS Medical Group Surgeon Dr. Ruben Boyajian
- » Grunloh Building Vice President Andrew Grunloh
- » The Beanstalk Boutique Owner Sara Ruholl
- » Flex-N-Gate Human Resources Manager David Vukelich
- » Effingham Performance Center Executive Director Kim Jansen
- » Zoning Board of Appeals Member and Tuscan Hills Winery General Manager Carrie Rodman

The survey responses and the discussions held at the various meetings laid the foundation for creating the 2050 Comprehensive Plan. The Plan was then divided into seven categories: housing and neighborhoods, economic development, community services and utilities, transportation and mobility, quality of life, future land use and implementation.

Housing and Neighborhoods

The Steering Committee agreed that some of the City of Effingham’s issues could be partially solved if there were more housing. About 40% of the Comprehensive Survey respondents believed housing cost is the most important aspect of housing that needs

Northside Ford Lincoln and Effingham Regional Growth Alliance representative Mark Mayhood discusses how housing, jobs and businesses are all tied together during the Feb. 20, 2025 Focus Group meeting.



Economic Development Specialist Sasha Althoff (left) and Economic Development Director Todd Hull discuss housing issues and solutions during the Feb. 20, 2025 Focus Group meeting.

improving. While housing is relatively affordable in Effingham compared to various markets across the Midwest, there aren't enough new homes and affordable housing options to support the city's growing population.

The cost of land, rising infrastructure costs and limitations inside city limits all contribute to the issue. New housing inside city limits is limited by several factors including floodplains, industrial land use and property values. If more homes were built, more workers could move to the area, which would draw new companies to Effingham,

providing more jobs.

"All housing is good. Do we wish we had more of the workforce housing development going on? Yeah, absolutely," said City Planner Greg Koester. "But with land prices, interest rates, construction material prices, stuff like that, it's very hard to do an unsubsidized housing project to keep that house price in that workforce housing price range."

The City of Effingham envisions having diverse options in a sustainable market, offering both affordable and high-quality living



Effingham Unit 40 Schools Superintendent and Steering Committee Member Andrew Johnson explains how the Unit 40 school district has lost several opportunities in the past because potential employees couldn't find housing.



Chastain & Associates Urban Planner Stephanie Brown and Sightline Planning and Zoning Founding Principal Jacob Seid provide feedback on their draft of the city's vision during a March 2025 Steering Committee Meeting.



From bottom right going clockwise: Steering Committee Member Greg Sapp, Steering Committee Member Mel Stock, Steering Committee Member Dr. Ruben Boyajian, Steering Committee Member Sara Ruholl, Steering Committee Member Katie Koester, Steering Committee Member Kim Jansen, Chastain & Associates Urban Planner Stephanie Brown, Sightline Planning and Zoning Founding Principal Jacob Seid, City Planner Greg Koester and Steering Committee Member Andrew Grunloh meet during a Steering Committee Meeting at the end of March 2025 to discuss housing and the city's visions.

options for all its residents. In order to do this, multiple goals have been established such as strengthening existing housing through policies and updates to the municipal code, as well as advancing housing infrastructure through capacity-building.

Economic Development

The Economic Development section in the Comprehensive Plan includes the Greater Downtown area, businesses and industries, major business and retail corridors, workforce and education. Downtown is the heart of the Effingham community and creates a welcoming atmosphere that attracts both residents and visitors alike.

Two of the Comprehensive Plan’s visions are to continually create the City of Effingham into a destination for new and innovative industries, as well as providing the skills and knowledge necessary for future opportunities. Some economic development goals in the plan are to prioritize maintenance and the beautification of Downtown, pursue funding for an underpass or overpass on South Banker Street at the railroad crossing and promote quality development for the Village Square Mall.

Although respondents from the Comprehensive Plan survey would like to see more parking options downtown, the city does currently offer 881 parking spots: 530 off-street parking spots and 351 on-street spaces. Public Works Director Jeremy Heuerman said that

building a parking garage costs more money than it’s worth, and not enough people would use it to make it worth the cost of operations and maintenance. However, one of the city’s objectives is to develop a wayfinding system throughout Downtown via signage or an app to indicate available parking.

To begin implementing these goals, the city will continue updating downtown and promoting downtown events, activities and amenities. To begin work on the overpass/underpass project, the city is planning to meet with both the Illinois Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation to initiate studies on feasibility and funding sources.



Steering Committee Members Kim Jansen (right) and Katie Koester (left) give their input on the vision draft provided by Chastain & Associates Urban Planner Stephanie Brown and Sightline Planning and Zoning Founding Principal Jacob Seid during a March 2025 Steering Committee Meeting.



Effingham City Planner Greg Koester leads the discussion during a comprehensive plan meeting.



Unit 40 South Side Principal Jessica Reeder discusses hurdles in the Unit 40 school district during the Jan. 30, 2025 Focus Group meeting.

To help assist businesses and industries, the city created five Business Districts and two Tax Increment Financing areas. Inside each of the Business Districts, there is an additional 1% sales tax, which is then collected and used to encourage business development and support infrastructure projects in the districts. Various tax breaks are also offered for different construction projects within the business districts.

Inside the City's two Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, tax revenue is collected to help redevelop properties, construct public infrastructure,

site work, building rehabilitation and demolition.

Over 60% of survey respondents said the quality of Effingham schools is either good or excellent. However, they also believe there are improvements to be made.

"We need the type of jobs that will keep youth here. Not more factory jobs that only stick around until the tax incentives are gone," said one survey respondent. "We have no reason for most of these kids to stay. Encourage trade schools for those who aren't able to afford college. More classes through local colleges at Kluthe Center."

Another survey respondent believes a 1% school-improvement sales tax would be a great asset, especially because of the number of visitors the city draws.

Unit 40 Superintendent and Steering Committee Member Andy Johnson is very proud to be part of Unit 40.

"Unit 40 — along with all other Effingham community and county educational institutions — bring a very inviting, engaging, empowering educational approach to our students to challenge them to achieve their goals and aspirations at the highest level possible," said Johnson.

Lake Land College President Jonathan "Josh" Bullock echoed Johnson's sentiment and believes the city does an excellent job supporting higher education.

"They've been there to support us in whatever we've requested support for, to ensure that our local employers have a skilled workforce, to ensure that students have options and opportunities," said Bullock.

Along with housing, another important consideration when it comes to supporting a high-quality workforce is affordable and available child care options. Focus group meetings highlighted a lack of affordable child care options. Employers have lost opportunities to hire employees because they were unable to find



Effingham Tourism Director Jodi Thoele explains the strengths and ways to improve the tourism department during the Jan. 30, 2025 Focus Group meeting.





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child care. In order to help with this, the city will encourage development of new child care options and ensure there aren't limitations beyond those enforced by the State of Illinois.

Community services and utilities

The City of Effingham's community services and utilities' vision is to be a connected and resilient community where accessible, high-quality services and utilities enhance the well-being and quality of life for every resident.

Some of the plan's goals include maintaining and growing partnerships with public and private organizations that provide additional public safety services, adopt environmentally responsible practices and techniques to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience of utility services, and investing in and modernizing community infrastructure



▲ ▲ Steering Committee member Brian Hayes discusses the 2050 Comprehensive Plan.



Sandy Althoff gets on a Central Illinois Public Transit bus. Effingham Daily News file photo

By Marie Adamick

Public transit in the City of Effingham is organized and run by Effingham County officials. The city aids them when possible.

Central Illinois Public Transit (CIPT) is one of the two public transportation options. It operates as an on-demand service throughout the county and is available to anyone whose trip begins and ends in the service area. CIPT is funded through its fare system, along with state, federal and non-profit grants.

The second option is ETrax, which launched in July 2023. ETrax has a deviated route system throughout the north side of the city. The 12 stops along the route were selected based on high-traffic areas and if the location had the ability to accommodate a stop. It currently does not have any stops on the south end of town due to the railroad crossing on South Banker Street. However, people may still request rides to and from the south side.

"If you can keep this loop going every 15 minutes and people get accustomed to them being there on time and being able to get a ride and get where they want to go, they trust it," said City Administrator Steve Miller. "But if they're sitting there and they don't know if the bus is going to show up for an hour [because of train holdups], there's less faith in the system. That's kind of what they're trying to do."

Thirty percent of survey respondents said it's very important to invest in public transportation services, while 32% said it's somewhat important. Respondents also believe current services are difficult to understand.

"Too many rules and restrictions to ride public transit, very hard to comprehend rates and transfers even for a literate person with high levels of reading comprehension skills, unreliable," said one respondent.

Another respondent mentioned how public transportation isn't available on weekends or at certain hours on weekdays.

"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 for all of our other counties, too," said Effingham Park Board Executive Director and Steering Committee Member Jeff Althoff.

More funding is needed in order to accommodate these concerns, and Effingham County Board Member Jeremy Deters is currently working on raising funds.

During an August 2025 city council meeting, Deters requested the council donate to ETrax because according to him, the county receives matching funds of 65% from the state for a maximum of \$740,000.

"I think when people find out that it's actually here, it'll get utilized more. We've seen a steady increase in ridership as far as ETrax goes lately, and that's why we're excited about trying to get a loop going," said Deters during the August meeting. "My whole goal as the chairman of that board is to make sure that our disadvantaged populations have access to transportation so that they can go to doctors' appointments, get groceries, things like that."

"I applaud Jeremy," said Effingham County Board Chairman Joshua Douthit at the August meeting. "He took it kind of upon himself to go to the different municipalities and villages with the key result being to help our citizens with transportation, and I know that's one of the identifying factors that people tell us that's preventing them from getting to medical appointments; that's preventing them from getting to employment, job interviews and those types of things. So I think it's important."

— such as libraries, health facilities and senior centers — to ensure access, long-term sustainability and adaptability to future needs.

The majority of survey respondents believe the quality of service that the police, fire, rescue and ambulances provide is either good or excellent. Over half of the respondents believe the city should spend the same amount of money on both the fire department and police department, despite increasing needs and upgrades both departments have.

In order to execute these goals, the city will work with the fire department to provide coverage in unserved areas, continue mutual aid agreements between the city and county for the dive team, emergency medical services and others, maintain a strong relationship with the county to share resources, along with several other action steps.

While Koester believes everyone in the community would like to see a better recycling program, he says that begins with education, reducing, reusing and recycling. According to Koester, previous recycling programs fizzled out because they weren't economically sound and programs continuously received non-recyclable items.

“So not only is it recycling, but it's the mindset of people watching how they do things, buy things — what have you — to where it doesn't create a lot of waste,” said Koester.



Illinois Housing Development Authority Community Revitalization Planner Kristopher Walton presents an interactive slideshow about the Community Revitalization Project for the City of Effingham during the Feb. 20, 2025 Focus Group. In the background are Steering Committee members Libby Moeller (left) and Kim Jansen.

Alongside education, reducing, reusing and recycling, the city continues to explore renewable energy sources in public utility operations, while protecting and preserving existing developed areas and agricultural land. For example, installing solar panels requires a permit from the city in order to help protect both the community and its residents.

“I know the one meeting that was pretty well attended was annexation of the Lake Sara area. It's just an interesting discussion, but the



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city has to look at it like if the city were to annex that, then they'd have to increase the fire protection, and then that's another building," said City of Effingham Plan Commission Chairman and Steering Committee Member Brian Hayes.

"They're already having trouble getting people just to go through the firemen training," he continued. "It's interesting how it all snowballs, so I think that ties into not really looking to go out and expand. But there's a lot of growing plans that go along with that, so it's very calculated."

Steering Committee Member and Unit 40 Schools Superintendent Andrew Johnson discusses the strengths and areas of improvement in the local education systems during the Jan. 30, 2025 Focus Group meeting.



Steering Committee Member and City Council Commissioner Libby Moeller (left) discusses housing in and around the city with another Steering Committee Member Kim Jansen (right) during the Feb. 20, 2025 Focus Group meeting. Marie Adamick photo

The Effingham City Council, the Steering Committee, the Plan Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals met in January to review and provide feedback for the city's 2050 Comprehensive Plan.

The following people were present for the discussion:

- » City Planner Greg Koester
- » Chastain & Associates LLC Urban Planner Stephanie Brown
- » Founding Principal for Sightline Planning and Zoning Jake Seid
- » Flex-N-Gate Human Resources Manager David Vukelich (Steering Committee)
- » Mayor Mike Schutzbach
- » Plan Commission Chairman Brian Hayes (Steering Committee)
- » RE/MAX Key Advantage Associate Jeff Speer (Steering Committee)
- » Plan Commission Member and Grunloh Building Vice President Andrew Grunloh (Steering Committee)
- » City Commissioner Libby Moeller (Steering Committee)
- » City Commissioner Jake Niebrugge
- » Effingham County Chamber of Commerce CEO and President Katie Koester (Steering Committee)
- » Effingham Performance Center Executive Director Kim Jansen (Steering Committee)
- » City Commissioner Larry Micenheimer (Steering Committee)
- » Public Works Director Jeremy Heurman
- » Premier Broadcasting Station Manager Greg Sapp (Steering Committee)
- » Police Chief Kurt Davis
- » Fire Chief Brant Yochum
- » City Administrator Steve Miller
- » Midland States Bank Market President Mel Stock (Steering Committee)
- » City Attorney Tracy Willenborg
- » XCHNG Founder Michael Brummer
- » Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman Mike Mumm

Transportation and mobility

The city envisions providing an efficient transportation system that establishes circulation, maintenance and safety for every mode of transportation. Over half of survey respondents believe it's very important for the city to maintain existing roadways, but they also believe the city should focus on traffic along Keller Drive and connecting the north side of the city to the south side.

Over 60% of survey respondents believe investing in public transportation is either somewhat or very important. Respondents also believe the current systems in place — ETrax and Central Illinois Public Transit (CIPT) — are complicated, hard to comprehend and have too many rules and restrictions. Currently, there is no designated public transportation that circulates through the south end of the city due to lack of funds. Expanded hours, more vehicles and additional drivers are needed to service this area of the community.

Effingham Assistant Fire Chief Matthew Kulesza during the March 10, 2025 Focus Group meeting.



Housing was the first topic of discussion. It is interconnected with multiple sections of the comprehensive plan and city aspects such as employment, schools and economic development. However, housing availability has been a challenge since the Covid-19 pandemic, says Steering Committee Member Jeff Speer.

“You start putting them [houses] next to someone else’s house, and they’ll say, ‘What are you doing? Oh. I don’t know if I like that,’” said Speer. “It’s tough.”

The comprehensive plan mentions a housing study that was completed in the city that says the following numbers are needed to regain housing balance: 100-125 affordable units, 200-300 moderately priced units and 250-350 high-end units. Apartments are considered moderately-priced units.

Steering Committee Member David Vukelich noted that less than 100 of the 500 Flex-N-Gate employees live in the City of Effingham.

“I was in retail for a while. It’s not unusual for people to travel from smaller towns into the bigger towns,” said Speer. “This Walmart out here kills it! I mean, one of the best in the state, I believe, and there’s a reason for that: Because Effingham’s easy to get to, and guess what we have? We have lots of restaurants. We have lots of places to go, and so there’s a lot of that.”

“I wouldn’t be too discouraged that people aren’t coming here to Effingham to live,” Speer continued. “They may as they age because the hospital’s here.”

Land prices, construction prices, interest rates, lack of homebuilders and more all contribute to housing’s uphill battle. However, City Planner Greg Koester believes the City is on track to meet the suggested 200-300 moderately-priced units.

Chastain & Associates LLC Urban Planner Stephanie Brown said that more affordable housing units become available when higher-end housing is built. People living in the moderately-priced units will move to the higher-end units, which in-turn, opens up the moderately-priced units.

The city has several incentives for both housing and economic development, such as the Enterprise Zone, tax-increment financing (TIF) districts and the Business District. Most areas within the city limits have at least one of the incentives. The city is also focusing on developing certain corridors on Keller Drive, Fayette Avenue, S. Banker Street and N. Third Street.

“There’s been a lot of improvements in the last 10 years. Hope-

fully, we can continue that with this Plan,” said City Administrator Steve Miller. “There’s a lot going on down there [on the south side], and I hope we recognize that, as well.”

An important aspect of economic development is continuing to support the different educational opportunities in the City — such as the Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Program and the Creating Opportunities for Regional Employment (CORE) Academy — so people are properly trained for both the jobs in the city and future jobs coming to the area.

“Maybe Unit 40 has got the thing here that would get those housebuilders back,” said Koester.

In 2025, the city learned through an Ameren study that the Industrial Park is a dead zone, which has cost the city development there. Because building a substation there would be a multi-million dollar project, the city is working on applying for grants. The city is also working with Ameren to conduct an energy-efficiency study.

“It seems [that] everybody thinks that you just plug into an outlet, and it works,” said Speer. “No. We’re running out of power.”

Steering Committee Member Kim Jansen wants to add the Thelma Keller Convention Center to the Plan, stating it contributes heavily to both tourism and overnight stays.

“If you’re talking about really driving overnight stays in the community, you cannot overlook the Convention Center and the role it plays and how important it is here,” said Jansen. “I don’t think the community realizes how well our motels do and how many motels are actually here and what that means to our community.”

Jansen also added that different sports tournaments and Lake Sara events — such as Moccasin Creek Festival and Summer Sundown — also attract tourists to the area.

“That also brings up the point of how important it is for those industry drivers to participate in things like this,” said City Attorney Tracy Willenborg. “You don’t want to be overlooked. This is great — this turnout — but it’s the same players.”

The implementation section that concludes the plan shows each sections’ objectives, action steps, funding sources and departments responsible. Two significant aspects to consider when implementing these plans are zoning and future land use. As the 2050 Comprehensive Plan was created, each parcel of land was studied to see if both the current zoning and the future land use make sense. The plan was written in such a way where changes to it, zoning and future land use can be made, if needed.



Jake Seid — founding principal for Sightline Planning and Zoning — helps brainstorm ideas for the city's 2050 Comprehensive Plan during the first meeting for the city's plan on Nov. 14, 2024. In back, pictured from left to right: Steering Committee Members Andrew Johnson, Dr. Ruben Boyajian and David Vukelich; and City Planner Greg Koester.



Fire Chief Brant Yochum (center) lists the present and future needs of the city's fire department during an emergency services Focus Group meeting. Pictured left is retired police chief Jason McFarland, and pictured right is Deputy City Administrator Dennis Presley

“We need a bus with a set schedule and bus stops. Mainly one that goes from south of town to north of town,” said one survey respondent. “The one now is okay, but you need to schedule pick-up times, and if you forget even once, you’re screwed.”

CIPT operates both in the City of Effingham and Effingham County, and it’s available to anyone whose destination and origin

are in the designated service area. The transit service is funded through state, federal and non-profit grants, as well as through funds collected from riders. On the other hand, ETrax follows a fixed route with deviations up to one quarter-mile away. The 12-stop route is completed each running hour, which allows for more reliability and consistency.

The City of Effingham is working on constructing an Outer Belt East that would extend Jaycee Avenue to Crystal Club Road to help relieve some congestion. The city will conduct a corridor study to identify the best route. Then, they will request feedback and support from the community, state agencies and federal agencies. This project will take planning and funding from the federal government, state government and community.

Another major project the city is planning is a roundabout at 4th Street and Rickelman Avenue. Some community feedback supports constructing one there, as well as one on Outer Belt West.

Community feedback also praised Effingham for its two interstates, three highways, rail lines and the airport. Along with convenient access to Interstates 57 and 70, Effingham also offers an Amtrak station that provides access to Chicago. However, railroad crossings impact traffic flow and raise safety concerns. One of the many goals of the city is to construct an underpass or overpass on South Banker Street at the railroad crossing.

The overpass/underpass project is part of the Illinois Department of Transportation's five-year plan. The city will work with IDOT and the railroad to study both traffic flow and possible options. The project



Effingham resident Nathan Painter discusses his hardships during the Feb. 20, 2025 Focus Group meeting that he faced when finding a house in the city.



Closer Look: Effingham housing

Effingham City Administrator Steve Miller points to the Industrial Zone on one of the zoomed-in Future Land Use maps during the beginning of the March 6, 2025 Focus Group meeting.

Story and Photo by Marie Adamick

Effingham offers a variety of housing choices, including single-family homes, duplexes, multi-family apartment complexes and senior living communities.

But housing was the top priority and challenge discussed during the city's comprehensive plan meetings. Land prices, interest rates, construction material prices and lack of construction-trade skills all contribute towards an uphill battle.

According to community feedback, 29% of people are looking for homes that cost over \$250,000, while the same amount of people are looking for homes that range

between \$200,000 - \$250,000 and \$100,000 - \$125,000. Thirty seven percent are searching for apartments with rent between \$1,250 - \$1,500, 31% are searching for apartments with rent exceeding \$1,500, and 18% are looking for apartments for rent between \$1,000 - \$1,250.

In order to help combat the housing challenges the community faces, the city established its current Enterprise Zone in 2018 and two Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity awarded the city its current Enterprise Zone at the beginning of 2018, and it has a lifespan of

15 - 25 years. The Enterprise Zone offers sales-tax exemptions when purchasing raw building materials and the abatement of real-estate taxes on the increase to the original amount.

"There's a lot of apartments that [have] gone up over the last five years. The thing that spurred that was they get tax abatement through the Enterprise Zone for three years," said City Administrator Steve Miller. "So when the city passed the housing component of the Enterprise Zone, that was a key to a lot of these developments going up because that tax over the three years for them helps them with their development to get the capital and get it built."

Inside the Central and Industrial TIF districts, certain housing project funds can be re-imbursed - including rehabilitation, repairs, and residential redevelopment - up to a certain amount.

Miller said the city considers the higher-end houses being built as a win, but all housing types are needed.

"We even consider those wins because somebody's selling their house, and then they're moving in, and somebody else is moving. It's kind of a trickle effect," said Miller. "You'll probably get two or three sales out of one larger home."

Several apartment projects are in the works for the city, including more around Golden Fields, on Jaycee Avenue and behind Gabby Goat. Hidden Hills Subdivision on Evergreen Avenue and River Ridge Subdivision on Route 40 are housing projects currently in development.



Steering Committee Members Sara Ruholl and Kim Jansen help brainstorm goals and action steps with Public Works Director Jeremy Heuerman during an April 10, 2025 Steering Committee Meeting to help the city reach its goals for downtown by 2050.

will be funded through the city’s general fund, grants, TIF funds and business district funds.

Quality of Life

The City of Effingham envisions a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable network of parks, trails and recreational programs that inspire healthy lifestyles, enhance community connections and celebrate the city’s natural beauty. This aligns with the survey responses that were received, with responses requesting more youth activities, playgrounds, bike trails and walking trails.

The Effingham Park District is its own governing body that works side-by-side with the city. The EPD is responsible for the maintenance, development and operation of the city’s parks, as well as its recreational facilities and programming. Evergreen Hollow Park, Hendelmeyer Park and Community Park provide a wide variety of activities including walking trails, swimming pools, fishing ponds and playgrounds. In addition to these, the EPD manages the Richard E. Workman Sports and Wellness Complex. However, the city maintains Bliss Park — a quieter, smaller and convenient option for nearby residents.

While survey responses for what recreation amenities the community would like to see was low, 8% of respondents would like to see more general youth activities; 7% would like to see more playgrounds, bike trails and walking trails; and 6% would like to see a splash park and more indoor recreational facilities. Other recreational amenities the community would like to see include community gardens and laser tag.

One of the ways the city will help improve the community’s quality of life will be through protecting and improving natural spaces, parks and agricultural land by incorporating sustainable practices in land development and maintenance.



Effingham resident Kathy Schroeder (left) discusses the Future Land Use Map with Steering Committee Members Mel Stock (center) and Jeff Speer (right) during the March 6, 2025 Focus Group meeting.

Steering Committee Members Jeff Speer, Brian Hayes and Mel Stock brainstorm goals and action steps for the city's Comprehensive Plan during an April 10, 2025 Steering Committee Meeting.

Future land use

The City of Effingham has a Future Land Use (FLU) Map that categorizes land of similar use, character and density. The map is used and periodically updated by city staff, plan commissioners and the city council when development or re-zoning is discussed.

The possible development or re-zoning should remain consistent with the FLU Map's categories. However, the FLU Map's categories are not zoning districts and do not legally set criteria for land uses. The categories identify certain districts in the city's zoning ordinances that fit within each future land use category.

Categories include rural-agriculture, suburban residential, low-to-moderate density residential, moderate-to-high density residential, residential-to-light commercial, commercial, central business district, business park, industrial, airport planning area, medical district, public/semi-public and flood zone.

Certain strategies are applied to each of the categories to help property owners and city officials make development decisions that are consistent with the FLU Map. While strategies differ between categories, some strategies include utilizing conservation designs to minimize disruption of natural features and rural character, as well as clustering development patterns to help conserve open space in suburban residential areas.

"I think that Future Land Use undergirds every other topic that we're talking about — so business, economic development, housing, of course — all of those other topics," said City Commissioner and Steering Committee Member Libby Moeller. "Everything we talked about... touches on every other Focus Group topic, but [Future Land Use] really still brings it all together."

Looking toward 2050

Overall, residents praise the City of Effingham for its schools, vibrant and welcoming community and multitude of events for all ages. The comprehensive plan will be brought before the city council for approval on March 3, but it will be continuously reviewed and updated as needed by city officials.





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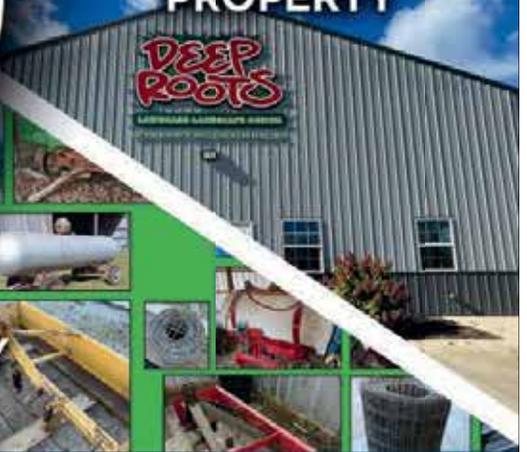
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As time has progressed, so has the frequency of choosing cremation versus traditional burial. "One conversation can provide peace of mind for loved ones that their final arrangements will be carried out in a way that they had hoped," informs Johnson. Not many want to discuss pre-planning your final arrangements, but it becomes an act of love for your family. Pre-planning decreases the 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 156 years.

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CSS serves over 1,500 individuals and families, reinforcing its role as a cornerstone of the community. What began as a grassroots effort by parents has grown into a leading provider of programs that empower people to live with greater independence, purpose, and community connection. Adam, for example, secured employment at a local business through our Supported Employment Program and now lives independently after graduating from our 24-hour residential program and transition house. Jay, who joined CSS at just 9 months old, is now 36, lives in a CSS residential home, and works in the vocational program. Macy overcame social barriers through our Community Day Services, leading to her first art show and newfound confidence. Scott achieved his dream of starting a small t-shirt business with our support. These stories show the diverse and profound impact CSS has on participants' lives.

As our community grows, so do the needs of those we serve. To better support the future, CSS is expanding and modernizing its Community Day Services and vocational training facility in Teutopolis. The expanded facility will feature accessible classrooms, an upgraded outdoor recreation area, improved work-skills training equipment, and more. Renovations are underway and will be finalized in Spring 2026, bringing local programs together under one roof. Services will be more efficient, accessible, and welcoming, removing barriers and creating more opportunities for individuals working toward connection and independence in Effingham County.

By investing in modern facilities and unified services, Community Support Systems is planning for the future, ensuring that individuals of all abilities have the space, tools, and opportunities to Live, Learn, Work and Play. Strengthening the foundation today ensures CSS can continue its mission for generations to come. We invite you to join this important effort. Your support, through donations or sharing our message, helps make a meaningful impact and build a brighter future for Effingham County.

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University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign students (from left) Jack Vonderheide, Joey Cardani, Prama Barua and Will Pujol present a Comprehensive Plan draft during the May 7, 2025 Village Board Meeting.

Teutopolis plans for the *future*

Story and Photos by Marie Adamick

The Village of Teutopolis updated its comprehensive plan in 2025 to reflect the village’s job and population growth, as well as demographic changes, since its last plan in 2011. Village officials want to understand their community’s needs better, engage residents in long-term visioning and maintain the community’s character.

The plan describes the village’s common values, goals and visions for the next few decades. Village officials will use it to help guide development while aligning with the community’s shared goals: growth, small-town preservation and agricultural heritage.

To engage with the community, the village created a comprehensive plan survey for residents and visitors - which was open from Dec. 16, 2024 through Jan. 31, 2025 - to share their opinions about the community.

The village also had help from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to help with the project. Students Jack Vonderheide, Prama Barua, Will Pujol, Joey Cardani and Professor Andrew Greenlee helped guide the village’s plan. The University of Illinois team and village officials hosted two public feedback meetings in April 2025.



University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign student Joey Cardani explaining some of the future land use and zoning feedback to a different breakout group during the second Comprehensive Plan public meeting held on April 23, 2025.

During the meetings, residents and community leaders discussed quality of life, water and sewage, future land use, housing, zoning, transportation within and around the community, senior citizens, economic development and child care.

“The community values its community facilities and the services, and they want to maintain the quality of the character and the quality of life, as well,” Pujol said during the first public meeting.

A draft of the comprehensive plan was created and shared with the comprehensive plan committee: A group of community leaders and figures appointed by Village President Dave Repking. After some revisions and village board feedback, the plan was finally passed by the village board on Aug. 6, 2025.

Housing

Housing appearance was well received by public feedback, but the community would like to see more affordable housing both for purchase and to rent, the ability to age-in-place, and more senior-citizen care. There is no senior housing or assisted-living facilities in Teutopolis, which bars people from aging-in-place.

Most respondents want to see more single-family housing and want to keep low-density housing to help preserve the community’s character. However, land prices and material prices are just two housing barriers.

Some actionable strategies mentioned in the comprehensive plan include encouraging public-private collaborations, changing zoning laws to allow more diverse housing, encouraging a variety of residential uses, and developing senior-citizen care facilities.

Repking says there is a committee made up of village board members and village residents that is trying to find land to purchase for more housing. However, no details have been finalized yet. Since the

committee formed during late summer 2025, Repking expects to hear an update from the committee soon.

“They had somebody that was very interested in the town growing, and that’s why they made a shot at getting that piece of property,” said Repking. “We do have a committee looking into it. They’ve been working on it for probably about six months, so we’re due for an update any time from them.”

Repking also noted that when developing more housing, the village considers how it could affect certain aspects of the community, such as the Unit 50 schools and the park district.

“People are wanting to build, and that’s a good sign to me,” said Repking.

Transportation

Residents are concerned about street safety, walkability, the sidewalk quality and network, lighting, bike lanes, visibility, traffic signs, golf carts and speed. However, feedback praised the village for its maintenance of Main Street and parking in the community.

“I envision sidewalks wide enough to have parents walking side-by-side, kids on bicycles, strollers,” said one public meeting participant. “I think that would be great.”

“Golf carts have taken over, and they continue to get worse. They don’t pull over, they ride down the middle of the road, underage drivers and no tickets given,” said another public meeting participant. “I would like to see the golf cart problem taken care of or gotten rid of.”

Actionable strategies mentioned in the plan to help improve these areas include implementing golf cart restrictions, updating the sidewalks to meet ADA standards, and upgrading pedestrian crossings near parks and schools.

“People are wanting to build, and that’s a good sign to me.”

— Village President Dave Repking



University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign student Proma Barua organizes notecards and sticky notes with feedback from the public about the village’s water and sewer during the second Comprehensive Plan meeting held on April 23, 2025.

Closer Look: Water quality

By Marie Adamick

Water quality was one of the biggest areas for improvement, according to survey results and feedback received at both public meetings held in April 2025 for the Teutopolis Comprehensive Plan.

The cast iron water line replacement project is the closest project to being complete. Village President Dave Repking estimates that about 25% - 30% of the water lines in Teutopolis are cast iron and need to be replaced with plastic lines - like the rest of them.

In October 2023, Teutopolis was awarded a \$2 million federal grant, which has since shrunk to \$1 million. The village board is working to make up the difference through different loan options.

Replacing the cast iron lines will improve water quality and water flow, Repking said. He hopes the project will be complete in 2026, especially since the village’s water quality was one of the biggest areas to improve upon.

“We need to get this done once and for all,” said Repking. “We’ll be one of the towns in the area that - even somebody that’s our size - that will have this all replaced, where a lot of them don’t. A lot of them still have lead pipes. We do not have any lead pipes going anywhere. It’s all copper or plastic.”



Above left, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign student Jack Vonderheide (left) and Village President Dave Repking (right) listen to feedback given by the community regarding economic development in the village during the second and final Comprehensive Plan public meeting held on April 23, 2025. Right, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Professor Andrew Greenlee explains the approach the Village is taking to update its Comprehensive Plan during the first public Comprehensive Plan meeting held on April 9, 2025.

Closer Look: Sidewalks and transportation

By Marie Adamick

The Teutopolis community would like to see more sidewalks - specifically ones that connect neighborhoods to the schools - and upgrades to the current sidewalks in the village.

The Illinois Commerce Commission, the group that oversees the railroad, is working with village officials to build new railroad crossings, including new gates and pedestrian crossings. The Illinois Department of Transportation is also working on designs. However, it costs at least \$2,000 for CSX to look into a project, and there is no timeline for this because the village is working with state funds, red tape and any environmental impacts.

"It's been going on long enough that we need to get the thing done and get it to fruition because the cost has gone up," said Village President Repking. "We'll end up getting it done, but we're in the process right now of getting easements."

A section of sidewalk will possibly be upgraded this summer, said Repking, who would also like to see the sidewalks expand out to McMahan Meats and Dollar General.

The community also highlighted wanting a stoplight at the intersection of Main Street and Pearl Street. In order to do that, IDOT says the village needs to install left-turn lanes, which requires more land acquisition. It's tricky since the intersection's jurisdiction falls under different levels of government.

"Can or will that ever happen? I don't know, but I know that's been recommended for a couple different years," said Repking. "But again, we have to get IDOT's permission. We can't just go ahead and do it ourselves because it is a state and federal highway."

However, the village does plan to re-do Pearl Street because the asphalt is failing and it's a designated truck route. Village officials will continue applying for grants and looking for other funding sources.

Economic development

Attracting new businesses, providing support for local entrepreneurs, supporting and expanding existing businesses, and the quality of education were the highest priorities for economic development. Providing more affordable housing can help support these goals, as well as implementing more taxes or special fees - which respondents said they were willing to pay.

"I think this is a no brainer for anybody that comes to this town. The education quality is top notch," Vonderheide said during the first public meeting. "It's one of the key reasons people move here sometimes, and I think that's really displaying what we got with the survey results on that."

Respondents noted that they would like to see Teutopolis have more restaurants, boutiques, grocery stores, retail stores and a coffee shop. They also highlighted how they would like to see a beautification program for businesses on Main Street, such as through facade upgrades.

The comprehensive plan suggests launching a "shop local" campaign to raise awareness and visibility of existing businesses, utilizing tax increment financing (TIF) programs and the Enterprise Zone, and establishing a committee focused on engaging business owners in local economic development.

Quality of Life

Residents resonated with the community's appearance, faith organizations, village

services (such as law enforcement and fire protection), village leadership, and approach to budgeting. However, water quality, housing availability and lack of access to affordable child care were three areas of improvement for the village, based on community feedback.

Forty seven percent of comprehensive plan survey respondents said they were dissatisfied with the water quality, with half of them being extremely dissatisfied. During both of the public meetings, several people commented on the quality of water, specifically noting discoloration.

Community feedback from both public meetings and the survey results identified the need for more child care. In order to help meet this much-desired need, the plan suggests revising zoning codes to allow home-based and small-scale childcare centers in residential areas, encourage a mix of child care services with workplaces or community centers, and pursue both state and federal funding opportunities.



University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign student Jack Vonderheide (standing) reviews Comprehensive Plan Survey results during the second Comprehensive Plan public meeting held on April 23, 2025.



Above left, President and CEO of The Alliance Courtney Yockey (left) and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign student Will Pujol listen to suggestions made regarding the care of senior citizens in the village during the second and final Comprehensive Plan public meeting held on April 23, 2025. Above right, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign student Will Pujol (left) and Yockey discuss the Future Land Use map during a breakout group during the first public Comprehensive Plan meeting held on April 9, 2025.



University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign students introduce themselves at the beginning of the first public Comprehensive Plan meeting held on April 9, 2025. From left: Will Pujol, Jack Vonderheide, Joey Cardani and Proma Barua.

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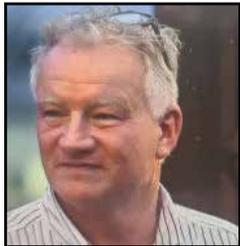


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UPCOMING SHOWS

SEASON 16

DATE/TIME	SHOW	TOP TIER	LEVEL A	LEVEL B
Feb. 28 7:00 pm	Six String Summit	\$30	\$30	\$30
Mar. 06 7:00 pm	Celebrating Meat Loaf	\$65	\$50	\$40
Mar. 12 7:00 pm	Vitamin String Quartet	\$55	\$45	\$35
Mar. 13 7:00 pm	Pauly Shore	\$70	\$50	\$35
Mar. 14 7:00 pm	Three Dog Night	\$80	\$70	\$60
Mar. 21 7:00 pm	Mama I'm a Big Girl Now	\$65	\$50	\$35
Mar. 27 7:00 pm	The Traveling Salvation: A Tribute to Neil Diamond	\$50	\$40	\$30
Mar. 28 7:00 pm	Fake News: A Tribute to Huey Lewis	\$50	\$40	\$30
Apr. 25 7:00 pm	Clay Walker	\$80	\$70	\$60
May 1 7:00 pm	Get The Led Out	\$60	\$50	\$35
May 29 8:00 pm	Henry Cho: The Empty Nest Tour	\$74.75	\$54.75	\$44.75

SEASON 17

DATE/TIME	SHOW	TOP TIER	LEVEL A	LEVEL B
Aug. 26 7:30 pm	Happy Together Tour 2026	\$85	\$65	\$55
Oct. 3 7:00 pm	Taylorville: An Unofficial Live Tribute Band	\$45	\$35	\$25
Oct. 16 7:00 pm	The Price Is Right Live!	\$65	\$55	\$45



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New Chamber Members

The Effingham County Chamber welcomed new members in 2025.



▲ ▲ **Hope 4 Horses Rescue & Sanctuary**, a local nonprofit dedicated to providing care, rehabilitation and a safe haven for equines in need, joined the Effingham County Chamber. Established in 2018 by Donna and Jim Columbus, Hope 4 Horses Rescue & Sanctuary offers hope and healing to horses, ponies, donkeys and mules — and occasionally other animals — on its rural Effingham property. The organization is operated entirely by volunteers who support the daily care and well-being of the animals through feeding, watering, cleaning, grooming and exercise. Hope 4 Horses is committed to creating a welcoming environment for volunteers of all experience levels. Training is provided, and volunteers are encouraged to take part in activities that match their comfort and interests. Much of the work takes place in covered or indoor areas, allowing opportunities to help in a variety of weather conditions. Individuals, families, teams and groups are all welcome. “Hope 4 Horses Rescue & Sanctuary provides compassionate care while creating meaningful opportunities for community involvement,” said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. “Their work reflects a strong commitment to service, education and animal welfare, and their Chamber membership helps connect them with additional community partners and resources.” Those interested in volunteering can sign up through LoveTheHam.org, where Hope 4 Horses is listed as a participating nonprofit agency. Volunteer roles are flexible and designed to ensure a positive, supportive experience for both the animals and those who care for them. For more information about Hope 4 Horses Rescue & Sanctuary, visit Hope4Horses.org. Questions or inquiries may also be directed via email to Hope4HorsesRescue@gmail.com. Volunteer opportunities are available at lovethemham.org/agency/detail/Hope4Horses. This Chamber membership was made possible through the Pay It Forward Program, sponsored by Land of Lincoln Credit Union, a Chamber Capital Investor, which allows it to gift Chamber memberships to local nonprofits helping them expand their reach and impact in Effingham County. From left, back row, are Chamber Ambassadors Clint Holkenbrink (Wabash Communications), Lisa Cornell (Midland States Bank), Michael Wall (HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital Foundation) and Steve Will (Dieterich Bank); front row, Koester, Chamber Ambassador & Capital Investor Pay it Forward Lisa Wilson (Land of Lincoln Credit Union), Donna and Jim Columbus and Chamber Ambassador Layna Bond (Bond & Associates-American Family Insurance).



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Conspectus Gaming**, owned by Chet Bogdajewicz, as a new member and addition to the Downtown Effingham Business Group. The name *Conspectus* — meaning “comprehensive view or a deep understanding of” — captures the business’ mission to provide an engaging space where both new and experienced players can explore tabletop and trading card games. The shop features a wide variety of popular games, including Magic: The Gathering, Pokémon, Lorcan, Star Wars Unlimited, One Piece and Warhammer. In addition to its retail offerings, Conspectus Gaming hosts tournaments, events and casual play nights designed to connect players of all ages and skill levels. “Conspectus Gaming is a welcome addition to both the Chamber and the Downtown Effingham Business Group. This business brings people together in a fun, inclusive way while adding to the opportunities available in Downtown Effingham,” said Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Allison Stevens and Debbie Womack, Chamber Board Member Jon Schafer, Bogdajewicz, Chamber Ambassador Russ Runde, Koester and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown.



▲ ▲ **WAND-TV** joined the Effingham County Chamber. WAND-TV, an NBC affiliate based in Decatur, has been serving Central Illinois since 1953. The station provides comprehensive news coverage, weather updates, sports reporting, and a variety of community-focused programming. With a focus on delivering timely and relevant information, WAND-TV aims to keep viewers informed about local and regional developments that impact their daily lives. In addition to its broadcasting services, WAND-TV offers advertising opportunities for businesses looking to reach a broad audience across Central Illinois. As WAND-TV seeks to strengthen its connections within Effingham County, Account Representative Abby Winans looks forward to collaborating with community members and organizations to highlight local stories and events. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack and Steve Will, Abby Winans, Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester and Chamber Ambassador Dan Capes.





◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Lakeland Rehabilitation & Health Care Center** as a new member. Located in Effingham, Lakeland has been serving the region for decades and continues to provide essential care and services to seniors in our community. Lakeland is part of the Tuteria Senior Living & Health Care network and offers both short-term rehabilitation and long-term skilled nursing care in a comfortable, home-like setting. Their team focuses on delivering personalized treatment plans tailored to each resident's unique health goals —whether it's post-surgical recovery, memory care or chronic condition management. Residents benefit from on-site medical specialists, 24/7 nursing care and amenities designed to promote both physical healing and emotional well-being. In 2024, Lakeland earned national recognition for its quality of care, receiving the Bronze Commitment to Quality Award from the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living. This award highlights Lakeland's dedication to providing compassionate, high-quality services that help residents regain independence and enjoy the highest possible quality of life. From left, back row, are Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will, Lisa Cornell and Michael Wall and Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester; front row, Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown, Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner, Recruiter Jahida Neal, Admissions and Marketing Coordinator Carol Brockett and Administrator Jade Nieman.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **ADM Animal Nutrition** as a new member. ADM Animal Nutrition provides science-backed nutritional solutions that support the health and performance of livestock, poultry, aquaculture and companion animals around the world. The Effingham facility has been a part of the community since 1994, with the construction of its modern plant completed in 2017. Under the leadership of Plant Manager Kyle Dieter, the facility continues to deliver high-quality feed and animal nutrition products to producers across the region. "ADM Animal Nutrition has a long-standing presence in Effingham, and we are proud to celebrate their continued growth and community impact as a Chamber member," said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. "Their commitment to advancing animal health and supporting local agriculture aligns perfectly with our Chamber's mission to

strengthen the business community." Headquartered globally as part of ADM, the company is recognized as a leader in agricultural supply and animal nutrition innovation. The Effingham location not only contributes to ADM's mission but also provides career opportunities and supports the local economy. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Dan Capes, Tonya Siner and Allison Stevens; Dieter; Plant Superintendent Nick Bergbower; Maintenance Manager Mike Briggs; Scheduling Specialist Adam Koontz; EHS Manager Daniel Everson; Operations Intern Mitchell Miller; Plant Service Coordinator Becky Durbin; Quality Assurance Specialist Alan Guyon; Scheduling Specialist Kyle Taylor; Chamber Ambassadors Layna Bond, Steve Will, Debbie Womack and Clint Holkenbrink; and Koester.



◀ ◀ **East Side Veterinary Clinic** has joined the Effingham County Chamber. 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, offering expanded veterinary care to the region. East Side Veterinary Clinic provides comprehensive veterinary care in a newly renovated, state-of-the-art facility. Services include advanced diagnostics, soft tissue surgery, wellness exams and hospital care for a variety of species.



▲ ▲ **Arrow Valley Landscaping**, owned by Tucker Willms, joined the Effingham County Chamber. Established in 2018 and based in Brownstown, Arrow Valley Landscaping provides landscaping and outdoor living services across central and southern Illinois. Arrow Valley Landscaping offers comprehensive services, including landscape design and build, landscape lighting, pavers and patios, retaining walls and water features. From left, front row, are Ambassadors Debbie Womack and Tonya Siner, Shy Haxton and Sales Representative Eric Rickman; back row, Ambassadors Russ Runde and Steve Will, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, and Ambassador Dan Capes. Not pictured is owner Tucker Willms.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **First Mid Insurance Group** as a new member. First Mid Insurance Group has more than 100 years of experience helping businesses and families manage risk. As an independent agency, First Mid offers a broad range of coverage, including business insurance, home and auto, cyber liability and employee-benefit programs. "We're delighted to have First Mid Insurance Group join our business community," said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. "First Mid Bank has earned a strong and steady reputation here in Effingham County, and we have no doubt the insurance group will build on that foundation, adding depth, expertise and continued support for local businesses and families." First Mid Insurance Group is headquartered in Mattoon and maintains multiple offices across Illinois and the Midwest. From left are Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown, Account Executive Mike Lauter and Koester.



▲ ▲ **Wohlman-Aherin Insurance Agency** is now a member of the Effingham County Chamber. Based in Dieterich, the independent insurance agency has been serving clients across Illinois for decades, providing customized insurance solutions for individuals, families and businesses. With a strong focus on farm, home, auto, life and business insurance, Wohlman-Aherin Insurance Agency works with multiple carriers to offer personalized coverage that fits each client's needs. Co-owners Diane Aherin and Devin Aherin have extensive experience in the

insurance industry, particularly in farm and home coverage. From left, front row, are Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde, Steve Will and Tonya Siner, Owner Diane Aherin, Mandi Utley, Chamber Ambassadors Clint Holkenbrink and Layna Bond, and Co-Owner Norma Wohlman; back row, Chamber Ambassador Randy Jones, Agent Devin Aherin, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, and Chamber Executive Board Member Alex Steppe.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed new member **Discovery Christian School**. As a ministry of Christ's Church in Effingham, Discovery Christian School offers comprehensive education from preschool through eighth grade. Established in 2004 as Discovery Garden Preschool, the institution expanded in 2021 to include elementary and middle school grades. The school's mission is to provide students with excellent academic, social and Bible-based education. Discovery Christian School offers a nurturing environment where students receive age-appropriate education. The preschool program focuses on the total development of children, helping them grow academically, spiritually,

physically and emotionally. The elementary and middle school programs aim to establish a strong foundation for learning, integrating biblical principles into all areas of life and education. Prospective families are encouraged to learn more about the admissions process and schedule a visit. For more information, visit DiscoveryChristianSchools.com. Back row, from left, are Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall, Russ Runde and Randy Jones; School Board member Terry Harris. Front row, from left, are School Board Secretary Matthew Grah, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassador Lisa Cornell, School Board President Jeff Michael, School Board member Daniel Carter and School Board Treasurer Julie Koester.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Prairie Pressure Washing**, a new local business owned and operated by Larry Gehle of St. Peter, as a new member. Prairie Pressure Washing provides professional exterior cleaning services to residential, commercial and community clients across the region. Prairie Pressure Washing offers hot and cold water washing for a variety of surfaces, including homes, concrete, gazebos and churches, with a focus on restoring and maintaining the appearance of properties. From left are Chamber Ambassador Steve Will, Gehle and Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner.



▲ ▲ **Spero Family Services** joined the Effingham County Chamber. With a history spanning over 100 years, Spero Family Services, formerly known as The United Methodist Children's Home, has evolved from a children's home into a multi-service agency dedicated to providing hope, help and healing across central and southern Illinois. Their comprehensive programs are designed to support the emotional, educational and behavioral well-being of youth, families and individuals. Spero's Effingham location at 1901 S. 4th St., Suite 206, offers two key programs: Wraparound Services and Nurturing Families. Wraparound Services is an intensive, strengths-based and family-driven approach that helps families stay together while achieving their individual visions. The Nurturing Families program aims to teach positive parenting behaviors, thereby preventing family relapses, reducing juvenile delinquency, and breaking the cycle of abuse. With its home

base in Mount Vernon, Spero Family Services operates 12 locations across seven towns, including Effingham, Olney, Mount Vernon, West Frankfort, Marion, Murphysboro, and Springfield. Beyond these local efforts, Spero provides a wide range of services across 30-plus counties, encompassing 12 programs in community services, clinical services and child welfare services. Front row, from left, are Tucker Michels, Wraparound Coordinator; Amber Nickol, Wraparound Coordinator; Charli Robinson, Wraparound Site Manager Effingham and Olney Offices; Jayci McCraw, Wraparound Coordinator; Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack and Jim Hecht; and Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. Back row, from left, are Chamber Ambassador Dan Capes; Audrey Erwin, Wraparound Family Support Specialist; and Chamber Ambassadors Randy Jones, Michael Wall and Russ Runde.



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **LHC – Illinois Home Health Care** as a new member. Located in Effingham, LHC – Illinois Home Health Care provides skilled in-home nursing and therapy services to patients recovering from illness, injury or surgery. Services range from post-operative recovery support to chronic disease management, physical and occupational therapy, and more. While part of the LHC Group, a national leader in post-acute care, the Effingham branch caregivers live in the area. From left are Chamber Intern Anna Thomas, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Steve Will, Business Office Manager Jeff Colwell, Chamber Ambassador Debbie Womack, RN Clinical Director Tina Frailey, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown.



▲ ▲ **Helitech**, a provider of foundation repair, waterproofing and concrete leveling services, has joined the Effingham County Chamber. Helitech has been working in the Effingham area for years, offering customized solutions for foundation stabilization, basement waterproofing, crawl space encapsulation, drainage systems and concrete lifting. The company focuses on identifying the root cause of structural and moisture issues to provide long-term solutions rather than temporary repairs. "Helitech has an established presence in Effingham County and provides services that are important to homeowners across our region," said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. "Their decision to join the Chamber reflects a commitment to being engaged locally and connected to the broader business community." Serving as the local representative for Effingham County is Jeffrey Carter, Home Care

Specialist. Carter works directly with homeowners to evaluate concerns, provide inspections, and recommend appropriate solutions based on each property's needs. He can be reached at JCarter@HelitechOnline.com. From left, back row, are Chamber Board Chair Jay Buehnerkemper (First Mid Bank & Trust); Chamber Ambassadors Jeff Muhlbachler, Clint Holkenbrink (Wabash Communications Co-Op) and Michael Wall (HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital Foundation); Carter; Chamber Ambassador Debbie Womack (First National Bank of Waterloo); Koester; and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown. From left, front row, are Chamber Ambassadors Dan Patton, Jim Hecht (Dan Hecht Chevrolet-Toyota) and Layna Bond (Bond & Associates-American Family Insurance); Shy Haxton (Whitney Roofing); Chamber Ambassador Allison Stevens (Midland States Bank); and Rachel Holkenbrink (Bond & Associates-American Family Insurance).



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **El Rancherito** in Effingham as its newest member. Since opening in 1993, the restaurant has become a staple in the community, serving not only Effingham but also surrounding towns including Neoga, Greenup, Newton, Dieterich, Altamont and Beecher City. El Rancherito offers a wide variety of menu items from savory tacos and hearty burritos to combination platters and signature lunch and dinner specials. Guests can also enjoy their famous margaritas and craft cocktails. In addition to dine-in service, the team provides catering for special events. "El Rancherito has long been a part of what makes Effingham unique," said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. "We're excited to officially welcome them to the Chamber family and look forward to strengthening their connection with our business community." From left, back row, are Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde and Debbie Womack, employee Jose, owner Daniel Angel, Manager Bryan Angel, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown; front row, employees Gustavo and Favio, owners Josefina Jacinto and Cassandra Angel, and Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will and Tonya Siner.



◀ ◀ **Ginger Ale's Effingham**, owned by Brad and Casey Walk, joined the Effingham County Chamber. Located in Effingham, Ginger Ale's is a drive-thru beverage and snack destination offering a vast selection of non-alcoholic drinks and treats. Ginger Ale's menu features a variety of handcrafted drinks, including teas, lemonades, sodas, smoothies and seasonal specialties. With an array of flavor combinations, customers can customize their beverages to suit their tastes. In addition to drinks, the menu includes snacks such as soft pretzels, pulled pork sandwiches, nachos and cookies. The Effingham location is part of a growing network of Ginger Ale's drive-thru establishments across Illinois and Indiana. Other locations include Charleston, Fairfield, Lawrenceville, Mattoon, Mt. Carmel, Olney (Main and West), Robinson; and Terre Haute and Vincennes, Indiana. From left, front row, are Store Manager Kayeann Barger, Jayden Wilson, Miranda Kroenlin, Brad and Casey Walk, Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Debbie Womack, and Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester; back row, Chamber Board Chair Jay Buehnerkemper and Ambassadors Dan Capes, Steve Will, Randy Jones, Clint Holkenbrink, Russ Runde and Marty Stock.

The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Blaze & Glaze Pizza Co.** as a new member. Blaze & Glaze is a mobile flame-kissed pizza trailer serving up artisan-style pizzas with a crispy charred crust and fresh toppings. Locally owned and operated by Jenny Bailey, Blaze & Glaze's menu includes classic Margherita to unique specialties like BBQ Chicken and Chicken Bacon Ranch. Their rotating menu is made fresh on site in their custom-built pizza oven. Blaze & Glaze can be found at events, concerts, private events and pop-up locations throughout central Illinois, including EffingHAM-JAM. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Lisa Cornell and Debbie Womack, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassador Russ Runde, and Bailey. ▶ ▶



▲ ▲ **Barn & Bottle Winery**, a family-run vineyard and tasting room in Altamont, has joined the Effingham County Chamber. In a restored pole barn, the winery offers wines that are hand-crafted, processed and bottled in-house. The winery began as a dream of Andy and Melissa Voelker when they were exploring retiring. With encouragement from their children — Benjamin, Brandon, Brady and daughter-in-law Stephanie, Andy planted his first vines in 2013. After their initial Niagara grape harvest in 2016 produced "Sweetie," a sweet white table wine now among their top sellers, the family began building a proper winery. Construction of the wine lab began in 2019, followed by expansion into a full tasting room that opened softly in October 2022 and

celebrated its grand opening in March 2023. Barn & Bottle Winery also serves as a community gathering spot. The winery regularly hosts live music, vendor fairs and seasonal festivals. "Barn & Bottle Winery captures the essence of local craftsmanship and community spirit," said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. "Their dedication to hand-crafted winemaking and creating an inviting space for friends and families is a perfect match for our Chamber's mission of fostering vibrant, place-based businesses." From left are Chamber Ambassador Steve Will, Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown, Koester, Owners Andy and Melissa Voelker, Myla and Benjamin Voelker and Chamber Ambassador Marty Stock.



◀ ◀ **Culver's of Effingham**, locally owned by Chris and Beth Debolt (Debolt Enterprises Inc.), joined the Effingham County Chamber. Located in Effingham since 2006, Culver's is known for its signature ButterBurgers, fresh frozen custard and hospitality. The Effingham restaurant offers a full menu of burgers, chicken sandwiches, salads and handcrafted desserts — all made fresh to order. Guests can dine in, carry out, or take advantage of the drive-thru and online ordering options. From left, front row, are Chamber Ambassadors Lisa Wilson and Debbie Womack, General Manager Christina Buchanan, Beth Debolt, Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner and Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester; back row, Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde, Michael Wall and Steve Will, Chris Debolt and Chamber Ambassador Randy Jones.

The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Angeled Kids: Foster Closet & Resale** as a new member. Based in Effingham, Angeled Kids is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting children in the foster care system by providing families with clothing necessities and other essential resources. At their Effingham storefront located at 1704 Banker St., the team behind Angeled Kids works to ease the stress on foster families by offering quality consignment clothing, essential items and a supportive community environment. "Angeled Kids' mission aligns beautifully with our community's values of care and connection. By supporting children in foster care and the families who serve them, Angeled Kids strengthens Effingham County in a meaningful way," said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Chamber. Angeled Kids can be reached at 217-342-2574 or AngeledKids@outlook.com. Visit their website at AngeledKids.org or follow them on Facebook at @AngeledKidsFosterClosetandResale. From left, back row, are Natalie Hall, Koester, Cassidy Warren, and Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde (Dieterich Bank) and Lisa Cornell (Midland States Bank); front row, Josie Wallace, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall (HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital Foundation), Cindy Bushue, Teri Smith and Chamber Ambassador Debbie Womack (First National Bank of Waterloo). ▶ ▶



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Effingham Party Globes** as a new member. Specializing in unique and customizable party domes, Effingham Party Globes also offers a white bounce house and eye-catching balloon arches for any event. Owner Delanie Hagenseiker, a dance instructor and mother of three, brings her creativity and passion for memorable celebrations to every service she offers. Delanie's talent was displayed at The Chamber Royale, where she provided all balloon décor. Effingham Party Globes offers flexible packages tailored to events of all sizes and budgets, from weddings and birthdays to holiday parties and photography sessions. From left are Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown, Chamber Ambassadors Jim Hecht, Steve Will and Tonya Siner, Owner Delanie Hagenseiker, Chamber Ambassador Lisa Cornell, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester and Chamber Ambassador Dan Patton.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Watts Copy Systems** in Mattoon as a new member. Watts Copy Systems has been serving businesses since 1982. Founded in Springfield, the company has grown to nine facilities across Illinois, including offices in Springfield, Decatur, Champaign, Mattoon, Belleville, Quincy, Macomb, Peoria and Bloomington. The Mattoon office is led by Kaleb Guymon, Senior Product Consultant, who works closely with businesses to create custom solutions for their document management and technology needs. “Watts Copy Systems

has built a strong reputation across Illinois, and we’re proud to welcome them into our Chamber community,” said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. “Their long-standing commitment to helping businesses succeed and their company motto, ‘Where service is more than a promise,’ aligns with our mission of supporting growth and innovation in our region.” From left are Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall, Layna Bond, Clint Holkenbrink and Steve Will; Guymon; Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner, Dan Capes and Debbie Womack; Koester; and Chamber Ambassador & Board Member Russ Runde.



▲ ▲ **Dr. DeAnna “Dee Dee” Brookhart** joined the Effingham County Chamber. Brookhart offers virtual mental health services through Grow Therapy. With a background in community and private mental health practice, Brookhart blends academic insight with real-world experience. Brookhart provides talk therapy to adults, couples and families, helping clients manage life transitions, stress, anxiety, relationship concerns and self-esteem challenges. Licensed in the state of Illinois, Brookhart offers virtual appointments to make care accessible and flexible for individuals across the region. Her therapeutic style incorporates evidence-based practices with a personalized touch, helping clients feel seen, understood and capable of growth. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Debbie Womack, Dee Dee Brookhart, Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown and Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber announced the addition of **FBI Buildings Inc.** to its membership. Founded in 1958, FBI Buildings provides design-build solutions for farm shops, horse barns, commercial facilities, residential garages and barndominiums. Headquartered in Remington, Indiana, FBI Buildings serves customers across Illinois, Indiana and surrounding states. The company’s in-house team manages every stage of the process — from site planning and permitting to design and construction. FBI also operates a Repair & Renovation Division that specializes in work on post-frame buildings, regardless of the builder. They can also service steel-frame structures, Quonset huts and residential metal roofing, helping customers restore, upgrade and extend the life of their existing buildings. “FBI Buildings has a strong reputation for craftsmanship and customer service. Their experience in commercial and agricultural construction adds value to our regional business community and provides local property owners with a trusted partner for long-term building needs,” said Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. For local inquiries, contact Project Sales Consultant Harrison Fitzjarrald directly at 217-708-1740. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall and Debbie Womack, Fitzjarrald, Koester, Chamber Ambassador Steve Will and Chamber Board Chair Jay Buehnerkemper.



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Anchord Money**, owned and operated by Linda Simpson, as a new member. With over 30 years of experience teaching financial literacy in higher education, Linda helps individuals, families and organizations build stronger financial futures. Anchord Money offers a wide range of services, from self-paced online courses and virtual workshops to in-person retreats, financial literacy camps and customized programs. Linda creates engaging, judgment-free learning experiences that meet people where they are. She works with a variety of audiences, including school districts, faith-based groups, businesses, nonprofits, health care providers and community organizations, offering programs that are practical, sustainable and rooted in real-world application. “Anchord Money fills an important need in our community,” said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. “Linda’s deep experience in financial education and her commitment to serving others through personalized learning make her a great addition to the Chamber.” From left are Chamber Ambassadors Randy Jones, Lisa Wilson, Debbie Womack and Lisa Cornell; Simpson; Chamber Ambassador Steve Will; and Koester.

The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Affordable Shred** as a new member. Affordable Shred, locally owned and operated by Rich Weekly, provides secure, affordable and compliant document and hard drive destruction services to businesses and residents throughout central and southern Illinois. The company offers both onsite and drop-off shredding options, making it easy to protect sensitive information while maintaining convenience and confidentiality. Effingham-area customers can connect directly with Tom Schreyer, the local customer service and sales representative, for personalized service and support. In addition, the Effingham County Chamber office is an official drop-off location for items needing to be shredded. “We’re excited to partner with Affordable Shred to offer secure document destruction not just for our Chamber members, but for the broader Effingham County community,” said Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. “It’s a valuable resource that helps protect sensitive information while supporting a local business.” From left are Chamber Ambassadors Jim Hecht, Debbie Womack, Clint Holkenbrink, Layna Bond, Lisa Cornell and Tonya Siner, Customer Service/Sales Rep Tom Schreyer, Jason Burris, Chamber Ambassadors Marty Stock and Michael Wall and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown. ▶ ▶



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Downtown Lounge**, owned by Brian Schultz and Kevin Chambers, as a new member. Located in Effingham, Downtown Lounge is a well-established gathering place offering a variety of drinks and regular events for the community, including Bingo Night, Traveling Trivia, Texas Hold ‘em Tournaments and themed events. As a member of the Downtown Effingham Business Group, Downtown Lounge actively contributes to local initiatives focused on business growth, beautification projects and community events that encourage residents to support local businesses. From left are Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall, Liz Phillips, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassadors Lisa Cornell and Tonya Siner, owners Brian Schultz and Kevin Chambers, and Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will, Clint Holkenbrink, Allison Stevens and Debbie Womack.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Daisies & Denim Boutique**, a women and men's clothing store in downtown Effingham, as its newest Chamber member. Daisies & Denim Boutique opened in October 2021 by previous Richland County CEO student Emma Weidner. The boutique offers a wide range of clothing from sizes small to XL, including denim options, shoes, jewelry, purses and accessories. In addition to joining the Chamber, Daisies & Denim Boutique is involved in the Downtown Effingham Business Group, a committee under the Effingham County Chamber that works to support and enhance the local business community. As part of this initiative, Daisies & Denim is committed to collaborating with fellow businesses, participating in downtown events, and promoting a positive shopping experience in Effingham's historic district. "The Chamber is excited to support Emma and the team at Daisies & Denim Boutique," said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. "Their dedication to offering stylish clothing and their involvement in the Downtown Effingham Business Group make them a valuable part of our local business network. We encourage the community to shop locally and check out all they have to offer." From left are Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown; Chamber Ambassadors Jeff Mhlbachler, Steve Will, Lisa Cornell and Tonya Siner; Owner Emma Weidner; Koester; and Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall, Debbie Womack, Randy Jones and Lisa Wilson.



▲ ▲ **Mosaic Counseling** has joined the Effingham County Chamber, as it continues to serve clients throughout Effingham County and the surrounding region. Founded by Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor Mallory Weber, Mosaic Counseling is a private practice offering in-person and virtual therapy for teens and adults. Services are tailored to support individuals dealing with anxiety, depression, life transitions, self-esteem challenges and more. Mallory takes a strengths-based, solution-focused approach, helping clients work toward personal growth and lasting change. With a background in school counseling and years of experience in the mental health field, Mallory understands the importance of accessible, personalized care. From left are Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassador Steve Will, Weber, and Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack and Lisa Wilson.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **LoveTheHam** as a new member. Founded in October 2022, LoveTheHam is a free, online platform created to connect volunteers with local organizations across Effingham County. Today, 39 local agencies use the site to share a variety of ways to get involved – from one-time projects to ongoing volunteer opportunities. The platform is free for both volunteers and agencies and includes volunteer management tools, tips and resources to help organizations coordinate their efforts more effectively. Through LoveTheHam, agencies can post volunteer needs where residents can lend a hand, as well as community events open to the public, including fundraisers, celebrations and awareness activities. "We're pleased to partner with LoveTheHam and support their mission of bringing volunteers and organizations together. The Chamber has utilized LoveTheHam since its inception to recruit volunteers for our annual EffingHAM-JAM event, and we've seen firsthand how effective their platform is in

connecting willing hands with local needs. Their work strengthens our community by making it easier for businesses, residents and nonprofits to give back," said Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. LoveTheHam can be reached via its website at LoveTheHam.org or on Facebook. This Chamber membership was made possible through the Pay It Forward Program, sponsored by Koerner Distributor Inc., a Chamber Capital Investor, which allows Capital Investors to gift Chamber memberships to local nonprofits, helping them expand their reach and impact in Effingham County. From left, back row, are Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde, Randy Jones, Steve Will and Michael Wall, and Koester; front row, Chamber Ambassador Debbie Womack, Koerner Distributor Inc. President Jordan Koerner, LoveTheHam Representative Kay Pemberton, Chamber Ambassador Jim Hecht and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown.



◀ ◀ **Loker Photography**, based in Effingham, has joined the Effingham County Chamber. Founded by artist and photographer Nathan Loker, Loker Photography specializes in high school senior portraits, eighth-grade experiences, business headshots and sports photography. With more than 13 years of experience, Loker takes a storytelling approach to photography. “At Loker Photography, we believe every individual and family has a unique story,” said Loker. “Our mission is to help you tell that story through exceptional photography.” Loker Photography serves clients within a two-hour radius of Effingham, including Mattcock, Charleston, Flora, Altamont, Robinson, Paris and surrounding areas. From left, front row, are Ambassador Tonya Siner, owner Nathan Loker, Ambassadors Steve Will and Layna Bond; back row, Ambassador Debbie Womack. President & CEO Katie Koester, and Ambassadors Randy Jones, Michael Wall, Russ Runde and Lisa Wilson.

The Red Thread Boutique, owned and operated by Alexis Buenerkemper since 2016, is now a member of the Effingham County Chamber. Located in downtown Effingham, the boutique features a curated collection of women’s clothing and accessories, combining classic styles with contemporary trends. The boutique prioritizes comfort and sustainability, featuring items made from recycled materials and organic cotton. Customers can browse new arrivals weekly, both in store and online, with the latest collections updated every Thursday at noon. Buenerkemper is also a member of the Downtown Effingham Business Group, a committee under the Effingham County Chamber that supports local commerce, fosters collaboration among downtown businesses, and enhances community engagement. “Joining the Chamber and the Downtown Effingham Business Group allows us to connect with other businesses, contribute to the local economy, and continue growing within Effingham,” said Buenerkemper. From left, front row, are Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown, Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner, The Beanstalk Boutique Owner and Member Referral Sara Ruholl, Owner Alexis Buenerkemper, and Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack, Lisa Wilson and Jeff Muhlbachler; back row, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, and Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will, Lisa Cornell and Randy Jones. ▶ ▶



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Koester’s Pro-Wash** as a new member. Locally owned by Luke Koester, Koester’s Pro-Wash provides exterior cleaning services throughout Effingham County and neighboring communities for both residential and commercial clients. Koester’s Pro-Wash offers a variety of services, including pressure washing, soft washing, window cleaning, roof cleaning, gutter cleaning and exterior surface cleaning (such as driveways, siding, patios, fences and more). His expertise extends to cleaning vehicles, farm implements, semitrucks and trailers as well. He is fully licensed and insured. In addition to the exterior cleaning business, Koester also operates Koester’s Christmas Lighting, a full-service holiday lighting company from design and installation to removal and storage that serves Effingham. From left, back row, are Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde, Randy Jones, Layna Bond and Michael Wall, and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown; front row, Chamber Ambassadors Lisa Cornell, Tonya Siner and Steve Will, owner Luke Koester and Ed Baumgarten.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Fear Nothing** as a new member. Fear Nothing is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to providing support and assistance to cancer patients and their families throughout Effingham County and surrounding communities. After cancer survivor Jodi Waymoth faced her own diagnoses and treatments, she launched the organization to help others navigating the challenges of cancer care. Since its inception, Fear Nothing has raised significant funds to assist patients with immediate needs, such as gift cards, transportation support and other practical resources, ensuring that 100% of donations remain within the community it serves. “Fear Nothing plays a vital role in our region by offering encouragement and tangible support to individuals and families who are fighting cancer,” said Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. “We are honored to have them join the Chamber and look forward to helping connect them with additional community partners

and resources.” To learn more about Fear Nothing’s programs or support their efforts, visit FearNothing.Life or follow on Facebook at [@FearlessInTheFaceOfCancer](https://www.facebook.com/FearlessInTheFaceOfCancer). This Chamber membership was made possible through the Pay It Forward Program, sponsored by J&J Gaming, a Chamber Capital Investor, which allows it to gift Chamber memberships to local nonprofits, helping them expand their reach and impact in Effingham County. From left, back row, are Callie Goodwin (J&J Gaming), Charla Lake (J&J Gaming), Emily Boyajian (Fear Nothing Board Member), Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall (HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital Foundation), and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown; front row, Koester, Amanda Stroud (Fear Nothing Board Member), Waymoth, Chamber Ambassador Steve Will (Dieterich Bank), Madison Woelfer (J&J Gaming), Lori Worman (Fear Nothing Board Member) and Chamber Ambassador Debbie Womack (First National Bank of Waterloo).



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Wright Choice Counseling** as a new member. With offices in Vandalia and Effingham, Wright Choice Counseling offers compassionate, faith-based mental health services to individuals, couples and families across the region. Founded by Licensed Clinical Social Worker Jessica Wright, the practice was established to address the growing need for accessible, personalized therapy in rural communities. Wright Choice Counseling provides a wide range of services, including psychotherapy, trauma therapy, play-based therapy, couples counseling and specialized support for military personnel and first responders. Their team utilizes evidence-based approaches such as EMDR, Brainspotting, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to support clients in their healing journeys. They offer in-person sessions at their Vandalia and Effingham

offices, as well as secure telehealth options for clients who prefer or require remote access to therapy. Recognizing that reaching out for help can be challenging, they also accept text messages for initial consultations, providing an alternative for those who may feel uncomfortable making a phone call. From left, front row, are Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack and Lisa Cornell, Drew, Director of Services & Therapist Katrina Schoenfeld, LMSW, Marketing Lead & Therapist Kaitlyn Eade, LPC, NCC, Founder & Therapist Jessica Wright, LCSW, and Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner; back row, Chamber Ambassadors Randy Jones, Dan Capes and Russ Runde, Admin. Assistant Caroline Beckman, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall, and Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. Not pictured are Therapist Merry Lichtenberger, LS, LCPC and Clinical Director & Therapist Jordan Tanner, LCPC.



◀ ◀ **VP Fire & Security Inc.** joined the Effingham County Chamber. Based in Teutopolis, the company delivers commercial and residential electronic security and fire alarm systems across the region. VP Fire & Security offers custom fire detection and security systems, 24/7 alarm monitoring, access control systems and surveillance systems tailored to homes and businesses. From left, front row, Ambassador Allison Stevens, co-owner Matt Pals, co-owner Mark Verdeyen, Technician/Project Manager Aaron Antrim, and Ambassadors Debbie Womack and Dan Capes; back row, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Board Chair Jay Buehnerkemper and Ambassadors Michael Wall, Steve Will and Randy Jones.



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Rios Mios Events** as a new member. Based in the Effingham area, Rios Mios brings professional DJ and entertainment services to weddings, parties, corporate events and more. Rios Mios also offers timeline creation and management, in-person client meetings, playlist collaboration, and a personalized approach to make each event uniquely memorable. “We’re excited to welcome Rios Mios Events into our network of Chamber members. Their commitment to bringing joy, professionalism and community spirit to events aligns perfectly with our mission. We look forward to having them engage with local businesses, support Chamber events, and contribute to the vibrancy of Effingham County,” said Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. Rios Mios Events is owned and operated by DJ Derek Rios and serves clients throughout central Illinois. From left are Chamber Ambassadors Jim Hecht (Dan Hecht Chevrolet-Toyota), Debbie Womack (First National Bank of Waterloo) and Lisa Cornell (Midland States Bank), Rios, Chamber Ambassador Steve Will (Dieterich Bank) and Chamber Administrative & Membership Associate Michelle Markham.

Randstad USA has joined the Effingham County Chamber as a new member. With a global presence, Randstad brings expertise and resources to support the local business community. Randstad USA provides a wide range of staffing, consulting and workforce services across industries, including health care, IT, finance, engineering and human resources. As part of the world’s largest HR services provider, Randstad combines cutting-edge technology with human insight to deliver customized talent solutions for businesses of all sizes. The Chamber looks forward to partnering with Randstad as local employers navigate changing workforce needs. This collaboration will provide valuable insight into talent development, hiring trends and recruitment strategies. “Having Randstad USA as a member strengthens our ability to support both employers and job seekers across Effingham County,” said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. “Their national expertise, combined with a local focus, makes them an ideal partner in growing our region’s workforce.” Local Randstad contact Jessica Bushaw, Operations Manager, will be located within Effingham Machining & Assembly Components Inc. (EMAC) at 1500 Heartland Ave., Effingham, and can be reached at 414-285-0941. From left, back row, are Chamber Ambassadors Allison Stevens, Michael Wall, Lisa Cornell, Randy Jones and Russ Runde; front row, Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown holding cutout of Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassadors Tonya Siner and Steve Will, Randstad Area Vice President Lauren Latimer, Randstad Operations Manager Jessica Bushaw and Randstad Regional Vice President Tim Green. ▶ ▶





◀ ◀ **Derksen Buildings** of Effingham joined the Effingham County Chamber. Owned and operated by Matt and Sue Huelskoetter, Derksen Buildings of Effingham offers a diverse selection of handcrafted portable buildings, including barns, cabins, utility sheds and garages. Since 1995, each structure has reflected Mennonite craftsmanship. Located in Teutopolis, Derksen Buildings of Effingham serves customers throughout the region. Their virtual custom shed builder allows customers to design their ideal structure from home. From left are Chamber Ambassador Russ Runde, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will and Tonya Siner, and Sue and Mark Huelskoetter.



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Ivy + Birch Design Company** as a new member. Based in Effingham, Ivy + Birch Co. is a full-service interior design and contracting business. Ivy + Birch Co. is led by Owner and Designer Jennifer Jones, joined by Special Projects Designer Kate Mammoser and Designer/Project Specialist Shelby Hinterscher. Jennifer's passion for home design began while building her own family's dream home in 2019–2020, a project that sparked what is now a successful creative career. Jennifer's eye for functional and beautiful spaces pairs seamlessly with Kate's strong DIY and woodworking background — having redesigned nearly every room in her own home — and Shelby's design insight and project support. Together, they offer everything from complete interior decoration and color consulting to statement walls, general contracting, e-design packages and custom wood projects. "We are excited to welcome Ivy + Birch Co. to the Chamber. Jennifer, Kate and Shelby bring outstanding talent and creativity to our business community, and we're proud to support their continued growth here in Effingham County," said Effingham County Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. From left, back row, are Koester, Hinterscher, John Nuelle (Senior Financial Solutions), Mammoser, Chamber Ambassador Steve Will (Dieterich Bank), Tim Hoehn (Washington Savings Bank), Don Mette and Julie Steffen (Mette Cabinets & Countertops); front row, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall (HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital), Jones, and Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde (Dieterich Bank) and Debbie Womack (First National Bank of Waterloo).



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Nutrition Wise** as a new member. Led by Amanda Settle, RDN, LDN, CDCES, Nutrition Wise specializes in creating personalized mealtime strategies for busy individuals, families and athletes. Whether the goal is managing gut health, supporting IBS, or optimizing nutrition for performance, Nutrition Wise combines expertise and empathy to help clients feel their best and achieve their goals. With additional training in the low-FODMAP diet and firsthand experience with food sensitivities, Amanda supports clients in making sustainable changes that fit their lifestyle — without needing to eat separately from their families. "We're excited to partner with a member whose mission aligns with holistic, sustainable community health," said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. Nutrition Wise is owned and operated by Amanda Settle, who can be reached through her website at BecomeNutritionWise.com. Amanda and her team, Dietitian and Co-Founder Lindsey Purcell, MS, RDN, LDN and Assistant and Dietetic Intern Cassie Gorman also share helpful nutrition tips and resources on social media — follow @Become.Nutrition.Wise on Facebook and @Become.Nutrition.Wise on Instagram. From left, back row, are Rachel Holkenbrink, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall, Dawson Schafer, Chamber Ambassador and board member Russ Runde and Chamber board member Jon Schafer; front row, Chamber Ambassador Layna Bond, Purcell, Settle, Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner and Chamber Membership Director Becky Brown.

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Effingham Computer Sales & Service

Wayne Moran, owner of Effingham Computer, has built his business from a small, part-time “side gig”, into a busy, full-fledged retail store on Effingham’s south side. The business also has the distinction of serving as Effingham’s UPS Access Point.

Wayne has been doing computer sales and service in the Effingham area for more than 20 years, previously working as a lead tech for a couple of local computer places, then working in local radio for WXFJ & WKJT for many years before branching out on his own in 2016.

Effingham Computer started as a home-based business, operating out of his garage from their home near Lake Sara. In 2018, Wayne and his wife Neeley bought a new home in Effingham, and moved the business into their basement. Moving into the city brought a nearly instant change

to his business, and it very quickly went from a part-time “side gig” to his full-time job.

In 2021, Wayne and his family decided it was time to get the business out of the house. They began the search for a retail location before finally deciding to move into the Village Square Mall. After two years and much success inside the mall, Wayne and Neeley bought the property at 1906 South Banker Street. The building has been several things over the years, but most people call it “the old ice cream place in front of the mall.”

Nowadays, it’s one of the busiest places on the south end of town, with a mix of computer customers and UPS drop-offs. “It’s busy in here almost all day. Most days go by pretty quick.”

“And it’s not all UPS – not by a long shot,” he says. “In 2025, we did more than 200 new laptops, and built

163 desktop computers. About half of those were gaming. On top of that, we worked on hundreds of systems – I’ve lost count there. A lot of people think it’s all UPS, but that helps bring a ton of computer customers our way. There are days when doing both is pretty hectic, but it all balances out.”

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 expensive ‘annual maintenance’ plans. 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, HP, Lenovo, Asus, and others, and we often price match and price beat big box stores. For desktops, I’m a custom-built guy. It’s far better than a pre-built, and you get so much more for your money. We do everything from regular home systems to a lot of gaming stuff, and they’re all quality, upgradable systems. Plus, we do free setup and data migration on every new system.”

Effingham Computer’s hours are Monday-Friday 8 am – 6 pm and 8 am – 2pm on Saturday. You can call or text Wayne at (217) 690-9718 or email wayne@effinghamcomputer.com

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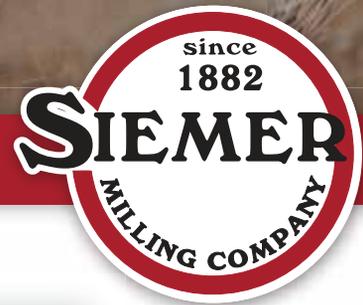


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EVOLUTION IN EXCELLENCE

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Celebrating a 65 Year Partnership

President Rick Siemer, with daughters Martha Stice and Katie Summers at Bühler's Commemorative Partnership ceremony in Uzwil, Switzerland. Our long-time relationship with Bühler has been key to our growth and innovation.



The Next Chapter

Henry Siemer steps into the role of President at Siemer Milling Company, ready to carry forward the family legacy and write the next chapter in the company's story. This milestone comes as his father, Rick Siemer, celebrates 50 years with Siemer Milling Company, including 39 years as President—building a legacy of excellence that defines the industry.

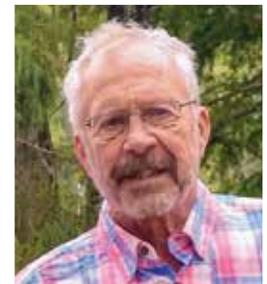


Celebrating 50 years of leadership.

Rick Siemer was honored for his first 50 years with Siemer Milling Company with a surprise reception.

In Memory - Tony Siemer (1944-2025)

Long-time Siemer Milling Company attorney, distinguished community member, and brother of Rick Siemer





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2026 EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS AWARD

A Legacy of Growth, Community and Commitment



The Northside Ford Lincoln Mercury journey began in October 2006, when Mark Mayhood and Jake Traub assumed leadership and ushered in a new chapter under the Northside name. At that time, the dealership consisted of a single aging building and a lot less inventory than we currently carry. As the automotive industry evolved, so did Northside.

What has remained constant is the dedication of the people behind the business. Many members of the original sales staff are still part of the Northside family twenty years later, joined by new faces along the way. Over the past two decades, the parts and service departments have more than tripled in size, reflecting the dealership's steady growth and commitment to service excellence.

Today, Northside is home to nearly 50 employees, operates out of three buildings, and features a completely remodeled service and main showroom. The pre-owned vehicle center has also been renovated, and the building to the east has been transformed to support our ever-growing service department. Inventory has grown to more than 350 vehicles, making Northside Ford a vibrant, fast-paced destination for both shoppers and employees alike.

At the core of Northside's success is a strong focus on people—creating a positive work environment with reasonable hours, a supportive culture, and an atmosphere that is both fun and rewarding. This philosophy extends directly to the customer experience, where the team strives to provide a welcoming, stress-free approach to vehicle shopping.

Northside Ford has been a trusted cornerstone in Effingham County for decades, serving the community well beyond the dealership doors. Their dedication to customers doesn't stop once you drive off the lot—it's a continuous commitment to exceptional service, top-tier sales performance, and genuine satisfaction.

What truly defines Northside Ford is not just the vehicles they sell, but the quiet, consistent ways they support the people of Effingham and the surrounding communities. Much of their generosity happens behind the scenes, but its impact is felt by many.

Throughout the year, Northside Ford supports a wide range of local needs—from sports and academics to community events and more. Beyond these sponsorships, the Northside team also gives internally to non-profits, with the dealership matching every contribution to double the impact. Each December, Northside designates a special week to order from locally owned restaurants every day, reinforcing its commitment to "shop local." This effort is now expanding into a full "Month of Giving," where the dealership partners with additional charities and non-profits to give back on an even broader scale—all while choosing to remain humble in their approach.

Northside Ford also introduced the "Open Tab" campaign into Effingham County, collaborating with local businesses once a month through simple acts of kindness and pay-it-forward moments. These events come with no strings attached and exist solely to uplift the community and support other growing businesses.

Alongside their dedication to the community and their customers, this company continually invests in their employees—a commitment made evident by the many long-tenured team members who have chosen to build their careers here. They've also broken ground on a new car wash, a project that will bring additional economic growth to the area. Northside Ford embraces fresh ideas and keeps the door open to new possibilities.

The automotive industry has faced constant change—from fuel price spikes and global uncertainty to the challenges of COVID-19, rising interest rates, and market fluctuations. Through it all, Northside Ford has remained committed to offering a strong inventory, meaningful employment, and exceptional customer service to the Effingham area and beyond.

We love Effingham, and it has been an honor to give back to the community we proudly call home. God Bless Effingham.

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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 2025.



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the **Effingham Tractor & Vehicle Museum**. As one of the newest additions to Effingham's tourism and business landscape, the Effingham Tractor & Vehicle Museum showcases a collection of antique tractors, cars and memorabilia — preserving the legacy of American innovation in its 10,000-square-foot climate-controlled facility at 17732 US 45, Effingham.



▲ ▲ Effingham County Chamber welcomed new member **Thompson Auction Team** with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at their new Effingham location, 2301 S. Banker St., #F, Effingham. Owners Jake and Tina Thompson gave Chamber members and guests a behind-the-scenes tour of their operation, showcasing how they handle everything from photographing items to conducting live auctions. Thompson Auction Team offers a wide range of auction services, including onsite, online or a combination of both. Their team works closely with clients to help them buy and sell equipment, tools, real estate, business inventory and more. "Jake and Tina

have built an impressive operation rooted in experience and integrity," said Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. "We're excited to have them join our Chamber community and continue growing their impact in Effingham County." From left, front row, are Dawson Schafer, Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner, Jake and Tina Thompson, Tina's mother Peggy Clough, and Chamber Ambassador Steve Will; back row, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall, Chamber board member Jon Schafer, Chamber Ambassador Debbie Womack, Tina's father Tom Clough, Chamber Ambassador Randy Jones, and Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester.



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for **Wild Foam Adventures**. A new Chamber member, Wild Foam Adventures delivers unique foam party experiences throughout the region. From birthdays to fundraisers, their safe and customizable events bring energy and fun to any occasion — including last year's EffingHAM-JAM.

The Effingham County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Andes Health Mart. Now located in a brand-new building, **Andes Health Mart & Pharmacy** continues to provide personalized care, a knowledgeable pharmacy team, and a welcoming environment for customers' health and wellness needs. Andes Health Mart & Pharmacy is located at 805 W Fayette Ave, Effingham. ▶ ▶





◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **The Place** as a new member and business of the Chamber community with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Owned by Jeanine Heuerman and managed by hairstylist Kagan Bradbury, The Place is located behind Shelter Insurance at 812 E. Fayette Avenue in Effingham. Among its services, The Place offers stylish cuts, color and professional blowouts. “Small businesses like The Place bring energy and personality to our community,” said Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester. “We’re excited to see Jeanine and her team thrive here in Effingham.” From left, back row, are Heuerman, Shelter Insurance Assistant Brenda Smith, Shelter Insurance SIU Supervisor Bob Atwater, Shelter Insurance Claims Adjuster Nemanja Tanaskovic, Chamber Ambassador Layna Bond, Sunrise Rotary member Josh Mathis, Mandy Bradbury, Marley Phelps and Koester; front row, Chamber Ambassadors Michael Wall (HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital) and Tonya Siner (Premier Broadcasting 97.9FM and KJ Country 102.3), Bradbury, and Chamber Ambassadors Jim Hecht (Dan Hecht Chevrolet-Toyota) and Debbie Womack (First National Bank of Waterloo).

Bike & Hike Effingham, now under the ownership of Robby Sams, has joined the Effingham County Chamber as the shop celebrates its 20th anniversary in business. Since opening in 2005, the locally owned cycling and outdoor lifestyle store has remained a go-to destination for cyclists, fitness and outdoor enthusiasts across the region. To mark the milestone, the Chamber joined Bike & Hike for a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Located in downtown Effingham, Bike & Hike offers a wide selection of bicycles, accessories, shoes, apparel and gear for every level of activity — from casual rides to competition. Their knowledgeable team provides expert repairs, personalized service and professional bike fitting. From left, back row, are Chamber Ambassador Dan Capes, Matt Dasenbrock, Chamber Ambassadors Russ Runde and Michael Wall, Jon Schafer, Tad Lewis, Lisa Schafer, Chamber Ambassador Jim Hecht, and Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester; front row, Chamber Board Chair Jay Buehnerkemper, Chamber Ambassadors Steve Will, Layna Bond and Lisa Cornell, Karly Frohning, Sams, City of Effingham Economic Development Specialist Sasha Althoff, and Chamber Ambassadors Debbie Womack and Tonya Siner. ▶ ▶



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for **MidState Building Supply**. Now located in Effingham at 209 N. Henrietta St. and a new Chamber member, MidState Building Supply continues to serve homeowners and contractors with top-tier materials, service and industry knowledge. Their new space offers enhanced convenience and support for local projects.



◀◀ The Effingham County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for **South Central Structures & Doors**, a division of South Central FS Cooperative. The business provides residential overhead doors and related services. South Central Structures & Doors serves homeowners throughout the region with quality products and professional installation, helping customers enhance both function and curb appeal.

The Effingham County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for **Lustig Custom Cabinets**. Under new ownership of Bruce and Lynn Lustig and their son, Alex, and celebrating 100 years in business, Lustig Custom Cabinets continues its tradition of exceptional craftsmanship from kitchen cabinetry to custom furniture. ▶▶



◀◀ The Effingham County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for **Eastland Apartments**. Partners Gary and Jake Doedman and Jessica Moreton officially celebrated the opening of their newly constructed apartment community located at 404 S. 3rd Street in Effingham. The family-owned development offers one- and two-bedroom apartments featuring bright, open floor plans and modern finishes. The property is now leasing and move-in ready.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Faithfully Home & Toters Inc.** as a new member. The Chamber celebrated Faithfully Home & Toters Inc. during a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Based in Neoga, both companies help families find the place they're meant to call home by offering manufactured, modular and pre-owned homes, along with complete transportation and installation services. Jonathan and Lacy Spour launched Toters Inc. in 2019 with a shared heart for service and family. A family-owned business, Toters specializes in the transportation, setup and servicing of both new and pre-owned mobile homes, serving clients across Illinois, Missouri and Indiana. Jonathan is a third-generation mason, while Lacy is a certified Women's Life Coach and salon owner. In 2025, the couple expanded their mission by founding Faithfully Home — an extension of their faith-driven, family-focused values. Faithfully Home helps clients design, purchase and move into

manufactured and modular homes every step of the way. The leadership team includes Ali Landreth, head of Operations, Sales & Marketing and co-owner, with expertise in the manufactured housing industry since 2018. Alongside her, Peyton Stewart, On-Site Foreman, ensures every installation is completed safely, efficiently and to the highest standards. From left are Chamber Ambassador and board member Russ Runde, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Head of Operations/Sales & Marketing/co-owner Ali Landreth, owners Jonathan and Lacy Spour, Chamber member Shy Haxton (Whitney Roofing), Chamber Ambassadors Layna Bond and Debbie Womack, Chamber member Rachel Holkenbrink (Layna Bond & Associates), and Rachel Kaiser, Field Representative for United State Representative Mike Bost.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber welcomed **Meraki Health** to the local business community with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The event, held at Meraki's new clinic at 101 S. Linden St. in Effingham, marked the official opening of their latest outpatient therapy facility. Meraki Health is a privately owned, family-centered clinic offering allied, behavioral and developmental health and wellness services. Their multidisciplinary approach provides services across the lifespan, specializing in pediatric therapy that focuses on clients with Autism and other neurodivergent disorders. The Effingham location will focus on pediatric services, applying Meraki Health's play-based therapy approach to facilitate the development of relationships and skills

in a supportive environment. Led by CEO Sarah Weiler, Meraki Health also operates locations in Newton and Flora. The organization helps patients function at their highest level by offering individualized 1:1 care. From left, front row, are Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner, Annalea Weiler, Logan Weiler, Marshall Weiler, CEO Sarah Weiler, Amber Carlock and Chamber Ambassador Lisa Cornell; center row, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassadors Layna Bond and Debbie Womack, Jennifer Hinterscher, Andrea Wendling, Allison Jenks and Chamber Ambassador Steve Will; back row, Chamber Ambassadors Randy Jones, Michael Wall and Russ Runde, and Kristina Arney.



▲ ▲ The Effingham County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the **Effingham County Historic Courtyard and Gazebo**. A landmark, the new gazebo now stands as a tribute to Effingham's past, present and future, as well as a gathering space for community events and photos. From left are Effingham County Treasurer Deborah Ruholl, Effingham County Board Administrator Angie Thompson, Doug Murrell with The Handy Man Can, Jarod Carlen with F&C

Concrete, Chamber Ambassador Michael Wall, Effingham Mayor Mike Schutzbach, Effingham County Board Chairman Joshua Douthit, Chamber President & CEO Katie Koester, Chamber Ambassador Tonya Siner, Effingham County Clerk Michelle Kollmann, Effingham County Board member Doug McCain, and Delaine Donaldson and LoElla Baker with the Effingham County Museum.



**Tom Wright:
EDN Citizen of the Year**

Tom Wright was named the Effingham Daily News Citizen of the Year during the Effingham County Chamber's annual gala in January. He has been a strong advocate for the Dieterich community, supporting initiatives that foster growth and beautification. He played a pivotal role in advancing the residential development program that has made Dieterich one of the fastest growing communities in Illinois. Through his leadership and financial support, he was also instrumental in the completion of a facility that promotes an active lifestyle and strengthens community connections. He has been an active member of many civic and charitable organizations that benefit the Effingham area, including Lake Land College, Effingham County Chamber of Commerce, St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital, The Cross Foundation, The Alliance, and many others. He has had a positive and lasting impact on numerous individuals and organizations, all of whom have greatly benefited from his service and leadership.

We Welcome Erin Jansen, CPO

I was born and raised in Effingham, IL. I completed my bachelor's degree in Exercise Science at Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville and master's degree in prosthetics and orthotics at Northwestern University. I then went on to do residency in Maryville, IL and continued to work in that area for the past 9 years.

I enjoy helping patients and their families achieve their desired goals and outcomes, whether it is evaluating a new amputee for a prosthetic or assisting an individual with their mobility to become more independent via an orthotic device. I enjoy working with patients of all ages and varying diagnoses in order to widen my scope of practice and provide the best treatments possible. I feel I am skilled in providing a variety of orthotic care, including spinal, lower extremity and upper extremity, and both upper and lower extremity prosthetic services.

I reside in Effingham with my husband, Greg and three children.

Erin Jansen, CPO



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Andrew Sparks, CPO

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Erin Jansen, CPO



◀ ◀ The Effingham County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for **Donsbach Meinhart Agency**. With a new office and a partnership between Wayne and Jake Donsbach and Mitch and Brad Meinhart, The Donsbach Meinhart Agency brings decades of combined experience in the insurance industry. Their agency is located at 410 W. Jefferson Avenue, Effingham.

Excellence in Business awards

The Effingham County Chamber named Northside Ford Lincoln and McMahon Meats as the 2026 Excellence in Business Award recipients.

The Excellence in Business Award honors Chamber member businesses that demonstrate exceptional leadership, integrity, growth, and a lasting commitment to the Effingham County community.

Northside Ford Lincoln has been a trusted cornerstone of the local business community for decades. While widely recognized for its sales and customer service, the dealership's impact extends far beyond its showroom. Through consistent support of youth programs, academics, community events and local businesses, Northside Ford Lincoln has built a culture rooted in generosity and service. Initiatives such as the Month of Giving and Open Tab campaign reflect a people-first approach, while continued investment in employees, innovation and growth underscores the company's commitment to long-term success in Effingham County.

McMahon Meats, celebrating its 10-year anniversary in January 2026, represents both deep local roots and forward momentum. Building on the legacy of Teutopolis Locker Service, the family-owned business has grown into a modern operation that supports the local economy while staying true to its values. From workforce development and first-job

opportunities for area students to ongoing community support for schools, sports teams, churches and events, McMahon Meats consistently demonstrates leadership through action. Its involvement in Chamber initiatives and community celebrations reflects a genuine dedication to Effingham County.

"Both Northside Ford Lincoln and McMahon Meats exemplify what it means to lead with purpose," said Katie Koester, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber. "Their commitment to their employees, customers and community makes a meaningful and lasting impact, and we are proud to honor them as 2026 Excellence in Business recipients."





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For over 77,000 residents across rural Illinois, EJ Water Cooperative has been more than a water provider, we've been a lifeline. And now, as one of the fastest-growing water systems in the state, we're taking a major step forward.

Our new Operations and Maintenance Center, located on approximately 15 acres in the Dieterich Industrial Park East, represents a transformative moment in EJ Water's history. This isn't simply about adding square footage, it's about positioning our cooperative to serve our members with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Consolidation Creates Opportunity

EJ Water was operating from multiple rented facilities to accommodate inventory, equipment, and mechanic shops. The new facility brought all our operations under one roof, streamlining workflows, reducing overhead costs, and eliminating inefficiencies.

For our team members, this means better collaboration and improved working conditions. For our members, it means faster response times and more cost-effective service delivery across our 3,257 miles of waterline.

A Strategic Investment

This facility reflects our commitment to cooperative principles: meeting members' needs, investing in our communities, and planning responsibly for the future. As we continue expanding our service area and providing contract services to communities throughout the region, this operational hub gives us the capacity to grow alongside the people we serve.

By reducing operational costs and improving efficiency, we can continue delivering what matters most: safe, high-quality water at affordable rates for rural families and businesses.

The Operations and Maintenance Center is more than infrastructure - it's an investment in the people and communities that make up EJ Water Cooperative, ensuring we're equipped to serve generations to come.

Learn more at ejwatercoop.com or call 217-925-5566.



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We are dedicated to assisting elderly clients, persons with special needs, Veterans, and all of their families and caregivers. We take pride in developing individual estate, asset preservation, and benefits eligibility plans to best address our clients' needs with a caring and practical touch.

Announcing our new Senior Associate Attorney, Steven A. Milburn

Steven joins Dent Coulson Elder Law having served eight years as legal counsel for the Illinois Department and Healthcare and Family Services Office of the Inspector General. While there, Steven was directly involved in Medicaid long-term care eligibility determinations, handling both appeals of those determinations and advising the OIGs asset discovery unit on the application of the federal and State eligibility laws. He also performed trusts reviews as part of his daily duties. Prior to his role at OIG, Steven served as Deputy General Counsel to the Illinois Department on Aging, focusing his work on advising the Adult Protective Services Program in its investigations. Steven has presented frequently to various stakeholders in the elder law community, including the Illinois State Bar Association, the Illinois Institute of Continuing Legal Education, and the Illinois Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys.



Steven A. Milburn

In addition to his significant estate planning experience, Steven has a personal connection to individuals with disabilities: His five year old daughter, Lottie, has Down syndrome and was recently diagnosed with San Filippo syndrome. Steven hopes to use both his experience and personal insight to advise families in developing strategies for providing care and security for their loved ones with disabilities.

Steven resides in Springfield with his wife, Abby, and their four children, Lottie, Louie, Fran, and Ella. The Milburns stay busy spending time outdoors, exercising, and visiting with family. They also enjoy traveling, often to North Carolina, Michigan, and Colorado to visit family and friends.

Steven attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, earning Bachelor of Arts in Economics. He then moved to Chicago, earning his Juris Doctorate from the DePaul University College of Law. While in law school, Steven served as a legal external to the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Office of General Counsel where he researched the newly enacted Affordable Care Act and advised on Department action necessary to comply with the Act.

Steven joins Kaye Dent's team, along with Senior Associate Paige N. Fox and Junior Associate Crystal I. Post.

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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, 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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Lake Mattoon in Neoga.



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 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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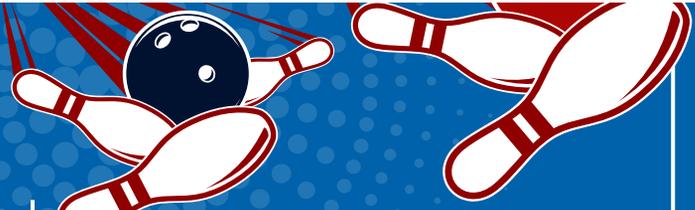




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Burl Ives statue in Newton.

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 Champion 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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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.



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Ruth Rhodes: Effingham Teutopolis News Report Volunteer of the Year

Ruth Rhodes was named the Effingham Teutopolis News Report Volunteer of the Year during the Effingham County Chamber's annual gala in January. She organized the Lake Sara Dam Run for 28 years. The annual event draws runners from all around. Rhodes starts preparing for it in January, even though it happens in early April. Rhodes spends a couple of hours each day updating forms and race flyers, sending sponsor requests, designing shirts and medals, reaching out to volunteers, seeking vendors, and posting info on Facebook. This year the Lake Sara Dam Run will be held Saturday, April 4. Details can be found on lakesaradamrun.com and the Lake Sara Dam Run Facebook page.

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from 50cc to 450cc's.

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

How does Car Corral stay small and sell big? It's simple: years of experience. Carl has managed Car Corral for 28 years and is an expert in all facets of Polaris and Can-Am powersports sales, service, and overall management.

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

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Shown is the entrance to Fair Meadow Farm in Altamont. The building pictured will be re-modeled into a horse barn either this year or next year for overnight horse stays. Marie Adamick photo

Effingham County fairgrounds expansion planned

60 acres purchased from Fair Meadow Farm

By Marie Adamick

The Effingham County Fair Association recently acquired an additional 60 acres of land east of the fairgrounds from Fair Meadow Farm. The land was purchased after the 2025 county fair for a total of 108 acres.

The first project the non-profit is working on is re-modeling the existing building into a horse barn for overnight horse stays. There will be 24 new stalls and at least six campsite hookups for horse trailers, hopefully in time for the county fair in August, according to Effingham County Fair Association President Phil Hartke.

Then, a new road will be constructed from Route 40, heading south along the

east side of the horse racetrack. Between 25 and 30 semi-trucks haul the equipment that is used in the three tractor pulls, so along with being a more direct route, the road will also help lessen traffic.

“That would alleviate a lot of traffic in our west entrance because all the semis [could] come in here and get direct to the infield,” said Hartke.

During this phase, more parking will be added to the land.

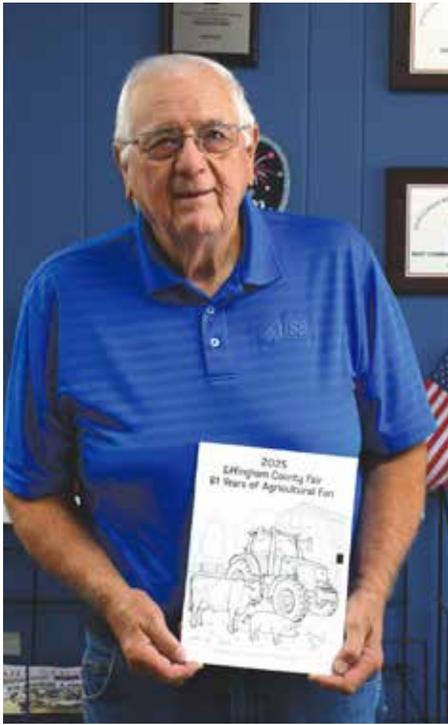
Hartke says the Fair Association hopes to have both the parking and road construction completed for this year’s county fair, but depending on funding, they could get pushed back to 2027.

The fairground’s sewer hookup will be extended to both the new 25 to 30 campsites being built and the 27 spots currently around the horse track. Hartke says the Fair Association would like to have the hookup extended before the road work, but timing depends on funding. New restrooms and a lift station will also be built.

“It’s going to make these campsites more valuable because there’ll be water, sewer and electric all hooked up,” said Hartke.

“There’s so many things going on in Effingham through the summertime. If people have their friends, relatives come in from out of town, they can stay at the campground.”

— *Effingham County Fair Association President Phil Hartke*



Effingham County Fair Association President Phil Hartke. Marie Adamick photo

After 2026, the Fair Association will begin its next project of having at least 50 new operational campsites for camping from March through November.

“There’s so many things going on in Effingham through the summertime,” said Hartke. “If people have their friends, relatives come in from out of town, they can stay at the campground. That’s not very far from Lake Sara. It’s not very far from Effingham.”

Then, the Fair Association plans to build a pond with fish and a dock, walking trails around the pond and a playground. They’ll also add vending machines, an outdoor grill and a pavilion to the area. The group also plans to convert the stream on the new property into a nice-looking waterway with a better slope for mowing grass.

However, the ultimate goal for the Fair Association is to create a 200-foot by 400-foot multi-use, covered arena in the northeast corner of the new property. The arena will be used for horse competitions, horse shows, craft shows, tractor pulls and other community events, but the project is at least five years away, Hartke says.

“This covered arena is really kind of a pipe dream, but we’re gonna keep it on our radar,” said Hartke. “If we can do it, then that’s where we think it could be built.”

If someone wants to donate enough money to re-model a horse stall, they would get the stall named after them. The same idea for naming rights applies to the walking paths, its trees, its benches, the pond, the



Fred Helmuth of Arcola competes in the tractor pull at the 2022 Effingham County Fair. Effingham Daily News file photo

road, the playground and the new horse-trailer campsites.

For those interested in learning more or donating, visit effinghamcountyfair.com. The 2026 Effingham County Fair will be from Aug. 1 through Aug. 8.



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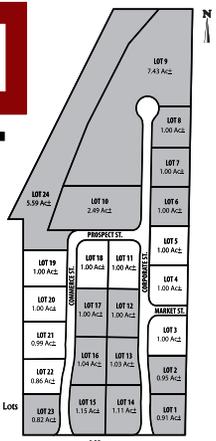
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While the number of 5th-generation family-owned businesses has declined in the United States, Wright's Furniture & Flooring is going strong. As the company enters its 136th year serving Central Illinois, the 4th and 5th generations of Wrights continue to lead this regional home furnishings favorite.

At the helm, company President and 4th generation Wright, John, oversees all divisions (Furniture, Flooring, Mattresses, Home Décor, Commercial Products) and overall company direction with the help of his nephew, Vice President Alex Wright, a 5th generation family member.

"It is truly unique that our business has been led by someone in our family for the last 136 years," John said. And John would know – his brother Tom Wright passed the torch to him after serving 40 years as company President.

"We've had such tremendous support from the community," Tom commented. "It's been an honor to be able to make a difference in the

homes of our customers for all this time." Now serving as Chairman of the Board, Tom was recently named 2026 Effingham County Citizen of the Year by the Effingham Daily News.

Meanwhile, John's daughter, Taylor Wright, heads up operations at the family's flooring, window treatment, and interior design store, Wright at Home, in Effingham. Completing the 5th generation of Wright's leadership, John's son (and Taylor's brother) Devin concentrates on flooring and furniture sales, drawing on his nine years of experience in flooring merchandising and manufacturing. "I want to take what I've learned over the years to help take Wright's to the next level," Devin commented.

"We find it a privilege to be able to work with family," added 5th generation and company Vice President, Alex Wright. "I've learned so much from my uncle John and my dad, Tom. Our team at Wright's is close-knit, and I think that's because at the heart of the business is family."

Family patriarch George W. Wright opened the first store in Dieterich in 1889.

In the decades since, the business has added locations in Robinson, Taylorville, and Effingham. Throughout their history, President John Wright said the company has prioritized hiring local and staying involved in the Central Illinois community.

"We are so thankful for our wonderful family, staff, and customers in Central Illinois," John said.

Wright's Furniture & Flooring features a large selection of quality living room, bedroom, dining room, mattress, home office, home accents, entertainment, commercial and custom furniture as well as a wide selection of flooring. The business offers design services through its Dieterich, Robinson, and Taylorville locations with Effingham specializing in custom window treatments in addition to design.

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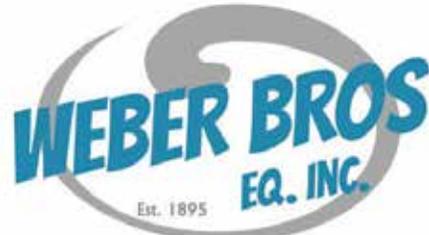
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In October of 2024, Effingham residents Darren and Kate Rennels opened The Arena Trampoline Park, a fun play area that appeals to different age groups. The park is open seven days a week.

The Arena Trampoline Park is very popular with toddlers on weekday mornings. "Most mornings we have groups of moms with young kiddos who come, grab coffee and let their kids run while they chat with friends," he said.

He said it also provides an opportunity each week for homeschooled kids to come and be together at a discounted rate and for high school kids with several area post proms scheduled each year. The Arena is designed to serve any age group, even adults. Patrons can celebrate in style with our different party options. Choose the size of party, and we will take care of the rest. We have accommodated parties from 10 jumpers all the way up to 200 and everything in-between! Our team does a great job of relieving stress for the moms and dads while still giving the birthday kiddo a memorable party with friends and family. To book a party for birthdays, company outings and special events, call (217)500-9472.

Darren noted that many adults like to take advantage of the fun that The Arena Trampoline Park offers for them as well. "We're close to several industries, factories around here, and they come when they get off work at 2-3 in the afternoon, and they'll go and do the Ninja Warrior course for 30 minutes and play basketball," said Darren.

The Arena employs 20 team members and an amazing GM named Mendy Rich who truly keeps the wheels on the bus and ensures a clean safe environment for everyone who comes.

The equipment the Rennels chose is made by the same company that builds the gymnastic equipment for the Olympics. In addition to trampolines for freestyle fun, The Arena features a Ninja Course, Basketball Air Track for dunking, Soccer Air Track, Dodgeball, and soft play area for younger kids, as well as a Rock Wall and Arcade.



Refuel and recharge at the concessions area, namely the Snack Shack, that serves food kids like, such as homemade pizza, cheese sticks, corn dogs, candies and slushies.

Darren said the community has been very supportive with hundreds of memberships and parties. Take your fun to the next level with the Arena Pass, providing you with 2 hours of jump time per day Monday through Friday. For those who want the ultimate experience, the Ultimate Arena Pass provides 2 hours of jump time per day, 7 days a week! The Arena Trampoline Park is open Monday through Thursday 10 a.m.-8p.m., Friday 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-10 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

One of the reasons Darren said they wanted to set up The Arena in Effingham is its ability to pull people from outside the city as well. Darren and his wife had first anticipated attracting people from about 35 miles around Effingham. They have found they are attracting people from outside that perimeter, routinely pulling families from Mattoon, Charleston, Sullivan, Martinsville, and an hour or more away, including Tuscola, Pana, Marshall and Mt. Vernon.

What attracts those people to Effingham is Effingham's reputation for being a safe place to visit.

"Effingham has a really safe community; people believe it's safe, and it has a safe reputation where you don't have fights and gang problems," he said. "It really has a good reputation of just being a nice, clean place."

Rennels said they built the business with growth in mind, and they can do that with the extra space in the facility they are in.

In addition to adding a gaga ball pit in December, new arcade games and a larger new attraction are planned later in 2026. Darren shared they are excited to announce they have broken ground on their second location in Mt. Vernon IL which will open in Q4 of 2026! We continue to develop our events calendar with discount days, sensory days and glow nights, so check in for new events each month.

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Shown is one of the front entrances to the Village Square Mall.

Planning the update to VILLAGE SQUARE MALL

Story and Photos by Marie Adamick

A group of developers updated the Effingham City Council in December on their plans to revitalize the Village Square Mall while it remains tied up in a legal dispute.

The Square Southtown group, comprised of Scott Kabbes, Michael Brummer and Karen Etter, placed the winning bid on the mall. However, the three cannot move forward with the mall's revitalization because of legal battles between the current owner, Durga Property Holdings, and the City of Effingham.

Durga Property Holdings is appealing an eviction order, which the 5th District Appellate Court has yet to rule on. No timetable has been given in the case, and the mall continues to deteriorate.

In the meantime, Kabbes, Brummer, and Etter continue to bet on the vision they have for the mall, citing that 2,600 people work within a two-mile radius of the mall and over 20,000 vehicles pass it daily, according to the Illinois Department of Transportation.

"We're going to focus on creating an entertainment-forward complex featuring a blend of entertainment options for all ages, but think: retail, health care, restaurants," said Etter. "We want to create a destination for Effingham and provide some amenities that are unique to our area."

Another goal they have for the mall is to bring back local ownership of it, including future tenants.

However, the recent deterioration of the mall has prompted the group to switch to Plan B, which includes developing the old Rural King and Jubilee areas during the first wave of construction. The group also expects to clean up the parking lot and add green spaces and boulevards to it within 12 to 18 months of officially owning the Village Square Mall.

"We want to revive the Southtown Business Association and work together with local municipality groups to — we call it [the] Southtown Council — to attract additional investment and beautify

Karen Etter speaks to the Effingham City Council while Michael Brummer (left) and Scott Kabbes (second from left) listen during a 2025 meeting.



Southtown. So that goal remains consistent,” said Brummer. “We can visualize what it could be and make it a destination.”

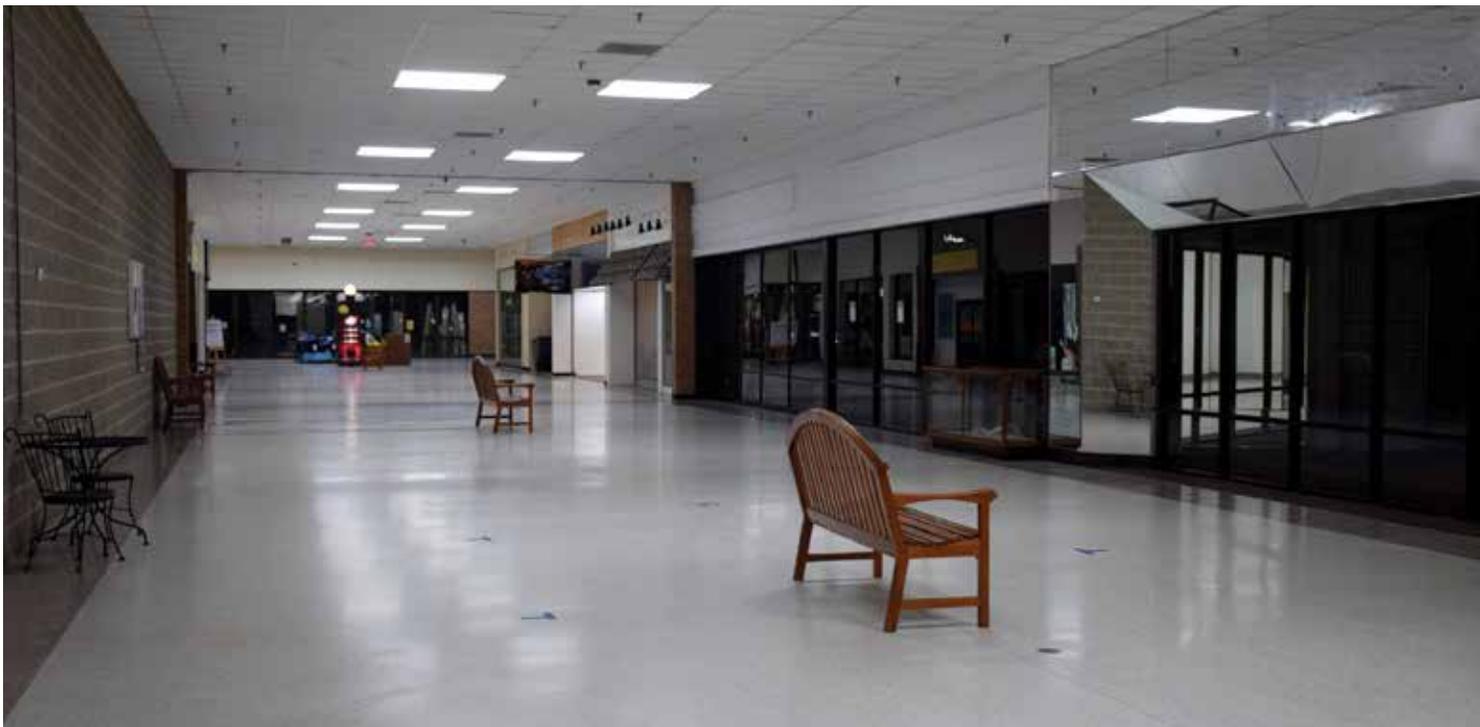
The council expressed its support and excitement about the possibilities ahead.

“The future development of the mall is important to the city, and I think you guys got a great idea,” said Mayor Mike Schutzbach. “Let’s just hope we can get there before we even decide it’s not worth it anymore because it is worth it for our city.”

“When you come in here and reignite our interest in it, it’s worth the climb — like you said, Scott — and it is unlimited what we can do with that thing,” said Commissioner Larry Micenheimer. “It’s unfortunate to have such a great big facility, but it’s also exciting knowing that we can turn your guys’ creative juices loose on that. And with the right tenants and stuff, it would be a home run.”

City Attorney Tracy Willenborg reminded everyone that the delay is due to court procedure and that there is nothing more the city can do at the moment. Square Southtown is awaiting a decision from the 5th District Appellate Court.

“The most exciting thing to me is that we’ve been incredibly grateful and appreciative of the community’s support,” said Kabbes.



Shown is the inside of the south side of Village Square Mall.

“We want to create a destination for Effingham and provide some amenities that are unique to our area.”

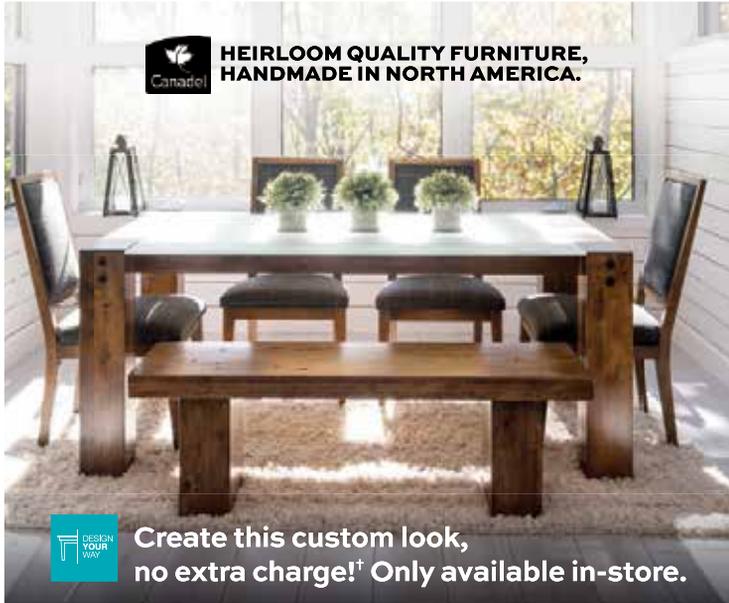
— Karen Etter of Square Southtown group

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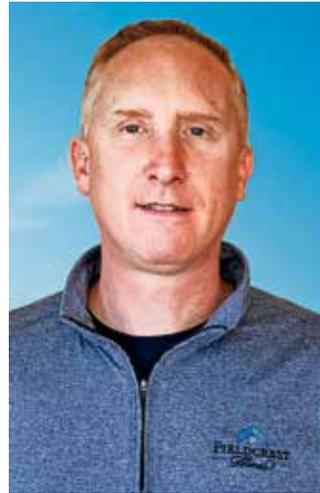
Fieldcrest Homes was established on the foundation of a passionate pursuit for building quality homes. With over 35 years of experience in the construction industry, founders Bryan Wenthe and Jason Wrone, both with deep roots in the Effingham community, have developed a collaborative, client-focused approach that takes

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Bryan Wenthe



Jason Wrone

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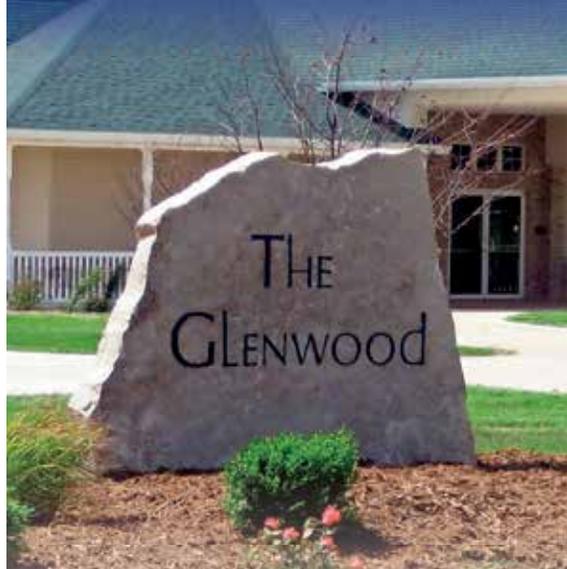


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A Place to Call Home: Life at The Glenwood of Effingham



At The Glenwood of Effingham, senior living is reimagined as a lifestyle rooted in comfort, compassion, and connection. Nestled in the heart of Effingham, this assisted living community blends modern amenities with personalized support, creating a welcoming environment where residents can continue to live independently while receiving the care they need.

Thoughtfully designed with both elegance and ease in mind, The Glenwood offers a supportive setting for seniors who value independence but may benefit from assistance with daily activities. Here, individualized care plans complement an engaging social atmosphere, and contemporary conveniences are seamlessly woven into a warm, home-like setting. It's a place where residents feel empowered, supported, and truly at home.

Families are also invited to explore The Glenwood's Respite Stay Program, which offers short-term stays of up to 30 days. Ideal for caregivers in need of a well-deserved break—or for those interested in experiencing community life firsthand—respite stays provide flexibility without pressure. Offered at a daily rate, this program allows guests to enjoy the full Glenwood experience while families gain peace of mind.

Enhancing the community's holistic approach to wellness, The Glenwood has partnered with EmpowerMe, a national leader in on-site senior therapy services. Through this collaboration, residents have access to physical, occupational, and speech therapy right within the community. EmpowerMe's dedicated professionals work closely with residents to support mobility,

communication, and overall well-being—helping them live healthier, more fulfilling lives.

An active and engaging lifestyle is central to daily life at The Glenwood. Residents are encouraged to greet each day with purpose through customized wellness programs and a vibrant calendar of social activities. Whether it's gathering with friends for a game, enjoying scenic outdoor spaces, or participating in educational and cultural events, the community offers countless opportunities for connection and enrichment.

Personalization remains at the heart of everything The Glenwood does. Recognizing that each resident's needs and preferences are unique, the compassionate staff provides attentive, respectful care in a welcoming environment. Dining experiences are thoughtfully prepared to accommodate a variety of tastes and dietary needs, ensuring that every resident feels comfortable, valued, and cared for.

Residents can also discover endless opportunities for joy and engagement through The Glenwood's dynamic activity program. From fitness classes and creative workshops to live entertainment and outings, there's always something happening to inspire connection and curiosity. Whether exploring new interests or continuing lifelong passions, residents are encouraged to make every moment meaningful.

At The Glenwood of Effingham, it's not just about assisted living—it's about living well—because everyone deserves a great life.



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217-347-8880

Leadership Team:
Executive Director – Jessica Overton
Wellness Director – Diana Doss
Business Office Manager –
Stephanie Cummins
Dining Service Director – Edward Jewell

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- Assistance with medications and activities of daily living
- Individually controlled heating and cooling
- LIFE INSPIRED daily social and wellness programming
- All utilities included, including phone and expanded cable
- Monthly family nights
- Pet-friendly community

AMENITIES:

- One- and two-bedroom apartments with private patios
- Kitchenettes and walk-in closets
- Private bathrooms with walk-in/roll in showers
- On-site beauty salon and barber shop
- Fitness center and coffee bar
- Theater/chapel and game room
- Outdoor walking paths
- Welcoming, restaurant-style dining room



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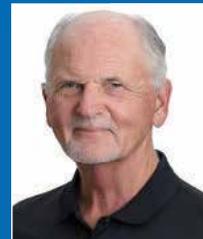
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Property Transfers



EFFINGHAM COUNTY PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 780 property transfers recorded in Effingham County in 2025, which totaled \$206,942,709. Although acreage is not listed on every sale, the total that was listed came to 4,090.1 acres. In 2024 there were 656 property transfers recorded in Effingham County, which totaled \$151,004,640.

The top 10 sales by price in 2025 totaled \$28,668,61 and encompassed 726.2 acres.

Address: 1200 W. Niccum Ave., Effingham
 Price: \$7,000,000
 Seller: Quad Graphics Marketing, LLC
 Buyer: F Street Effingham, LLC
 Acres: 12.7
 Date recorded: 09-11-25

Address: 1304 W. Evergreen Ave., Effingham
 Price: \$3,650,000
 Seller: Reva Properties, Inc.
 Buyer: Sai Jalaram, LLC
 Acres: 1.7
 Date recorded: 06-06-25

Address: N. 2000th St., Dieterich (Address number not listed)
 Price: \$3,606,875
 Seller: Carol Behrns Estate
 Buyer: David W. Behrns
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 03-12-25

Address: 1111 N. Henrietta St., Effingham
 Price: \$2,500,000
 Seller: Beta Hotel Property, LLC
 Buyer: Reva Properties, Inc.
 Acres: 4.1
 Date recorded: 08-01-25

Address: E. 1500th Ave., Altamont (Address number not listed)
 Price: \$2,348,250
 Seller: Tipsword Land Co., Inc.
 Buyer: Wendte Farms, LTD.
 Acres: 151.5
 Date recorded: 05-07-25

Address: 1400 Thelma Keller Ave., Effingham
 Price: \$2,200,000
 Seller: Maharaja Effingham, LLC
 Buyer: RSS Hospitality, LLC
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 03-31-25

Address: E. 700th Ave., Watson (Address number not listed)
 Price: \$2,012,000
 Seller: Mark Hochstetler & James D. Carpenter
 Buyer: 5E Farms LLC, An Illinois Limited Liability Company
 Acres: 195.6
 Date recorded: 12-17-25

Address: 15727 N. 2300th St., Montrose
 Price: \$1,800,000
 Seller: Patricia J. Flach Estate
 Buyer: Kevin R. Miller
 Acres: 85
 Date recorded: 02-03-25

Address: E. 700th Ave., Watson (Address number not listed)
 Price: \$1,791,486
 Seller: Mark A. Dyer As Surviving Joint Tenant Of Gloria S. Huckleby, Deceased (Parcel One)
 Buyer: Mark Hochstetler & James D. Carpenter
 Acres: 195.6
 Date recorded: 11-17-25

Address: 1606 W. Fayette Ave., Effingham
 Price: \$1,760,000
 Seller: A Vish 2417 LLC
 Buyer: Harishaan Realty, LLC
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 12-31-25

EFFINGHAM CITY PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 468 property transfers recorded in Effingham in 2025, which totaled \$132,790,164. Although acreage is not listed on every sale, the total that was listed came to 625.2 acres. In 2024, there were 344 property transfers, which totaled \$88,607,694.

The top 10 sales by price in 2025 totaled \$23,474,045.

Address: 1200 W. Niccum Ave.
 Price: \$7,000,000
 Seller: Quad Graphics Marketing, LLC
 Buyer: F Street Effingham, LLC
 Acres: 12.7
 Date recorded: 09-11-25

Address: 1304 W. Evergreen Ave.
 Price: \$3,650,000
 Seller: Reva Properties, Inc.
 Buyer: Sai Jalaram, LLC
 Acres: 1.7
 Date recorded: 06-06-25

Address: 1111 N. Henrietta St.
 Price: \$2,500,000
 Seller: Beta Hotel Property, LLC
 Buyer: Reva Properties, Inc.
 Acres: 4.1
 Date recorded: 08-01-25

Address: 1400 Thelma Keller Ave.
 Price: \$2,200,000
 Seller: Maharaja Effingham, LLC
 Buyer: RSS Hospitality, LLC
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 03-31-25

Address: 1606 W. Fayette Ave.
 Price: \$1,760,000
 Seller: A Vish 2417 LLC
 Buyer: Harishaan Realty, LLC
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 12-31-25



Address: 1607 W. Wernsing Ave.

Price: \$1,543,445
 Seller: One Broadway, Inc.
 Buyer: E-Environmental Solutions, LLC
 Acres: 3.8
 Date recorded: 01-27-25

Address: 15520 N. Blue Point Trail

Price: \$1,275,000
 Seller: Lee P. & Cathy S. Kaufmann
 Buyer: Tbeck Property Holdings, LLC
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 02-03-25

Address: 303 E. Fayette Ave.

Price: \$1,220,600
 Seller: JGKW Holdings, LLC an Illinois Limited Liability Company
 Buyer: Illinois Dept. of Transportation
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 06-27-25

Address: 8236 E. Twin Oaks Dr.

Price: \$1,175,000
 Seller: Barbara A. Zipsie Trust

Buyer: Zachary M. & Rachel S. Boyers
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 03-25-25

Address: 9856 Park Rd.

Price: \$1,150,000
 Seller: Bradley J. & Kaitlin M. Kaufmann
 Buyer: Lynn J. Thomason Trust
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 06-09-25

ALTAMONT PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 101 property transfers in Altamont in 2025, which totaled \$20,216,425. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 773.4 acres. There were 77 property transfers in Altamont in 2024, which totaled \$19,278,525.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Altamont in 2025, which totaled \$7,972,972.

Address: E. 1500th Ave. (Address number not listed)

Price: \$2,348,250
 Seller: Tipsword Land Co., Inc.
 Buyer: Wendte Farms, LTD.
 Acres: 151.5
 Date recorded: 05-07-25

Address: Farmland (Address not listed)

Price: \$1,000,000
 Seller: Jeanette W. Phillips, et al
 Buyer: Michael R. Lecrone
 Acres: 43
 Date recorded: 07-07-25

Address: Farmland (Address not listed)

Price: \$800,000
 Seller: Linda K. Niebrugge, as trustee of the James C. Niebrugge Family Trust, established pursuant to the provisions of the James C. Niebrugge Living Trust dated January 2, 1998, and restated on November 21, 2006.
 Buyer: JR Family Properties LLC
 Acres: 38.3 inches
 Date recorded: 12-11-25

Address: 14589 N. 200th St.

Price: \$760,000
 Seller: Linders Farm, LLC, An Illinois Limited Liability Company
 Buyer: 14589 North 200th Street, LLC, an Illinois Limited Liability Company
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 09-11-25

Address: 5892 E. 950th Ave.

Price: \$648,000
 Seller: Alan J. Whitt
 Buyer: Justin Fredlund
 Acres: 9.8
 Date recorded: 06-18-25

Address: N. 300th St. (Address number not listed)

Price: \$556,400
 Seller: Troy Tipsword
 Buyer: Richard M. Kelly
 Acres: 107
 Date recorded: 06-18-25

Address: 14730 N. 500th St.

Price: \$480,000
 Seller: Estate of Linda L. Holste
 Buyer: Ronald L. Hammer
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 03-06-25





Address: N. 600th St.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$475,322
 Seller: Ronald K. Miller Estate
 Buyer: Dale A. Laue
 Acres: 33.7
 Date recorded: 01-22-25

Address: 202 W. Cumberland Rd.
 Price: \$465,000
 Seller: Ruth Ann Hoffmeister Revocable Trust dated 11-22-11
 Buyer: 7124 Properties, LLC
 Acres: 1.7
 Date recorded: 04-02-25

Address: 4720 E. US Hwy. 40
 Price: \$440,000
 Seller: Christina Cripe
 Buyer: Jackson Loy
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 08-05-25

BEECHER CITY PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 17 property transfers in Beecher City in 2025, which totaled \$3,206,175. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 322.6 acres.

There were 24 property transfers in Beecher City in 2024, which totaled \$4,045,750.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Beecher City in 2025, which totaled \$3,002,375.

Address: E. 1600th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$1,160,000
 Seller: Troy Tipsword
 Buyer: Nathan Wendte C/O Roy Wendte
 Acres: 160
 Date recorded: 07-01-25

Address: 1584 E. 1600th Ave.
 Price: \$620,000
 Seller: Jamie Watson
 Buyer: Roy D. Wendte, et al.
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 05-02-25

Address: 1584 E. 1600th Ave.
 Price: \$347,375
 Seller: Jamie Watson
 Buyer: Douglas E. Hammer, Trustee
 Acres: 36.5
 Date recorded: 11-13-25

Address: E. 1600th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$274,500
 Seller: Troy Tipsword
 Buyer: Roger R. Nuxoll
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 06-23-25

Address: 14374 N. 1st St.
 Price: \$150,000
 Seller: Nicholas J. Burrow
 Buyer: Silas Buzzard
 Acres: 1.6
 Date recorded: 11-26-25

Address: 1584 E. 1600th Ave.
 Price: \$135,500
 Seller: Jamie Watson
 Buyer: Austin Herboth
 Acres: 5.1
 Date recorded: 11-13-25

Address: E. 1800th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$95,000
 Seller: Sherry Wagner
 Buyer: Larry Arnold
 Acres: 38
 Date recorded: 04-16-25

Address: 3079 E. 2100th Ave.
 Price: \$78,000
 Seller: Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC
 Buyer: Jeremy McMillan
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 10-10-25

Address: 208 N. Charles St.
 Price: \$77,000

Seller: Michelle Kade
 Buyer: John Dewitt
 Acres: 0.3
 Date recorded: 09-23-25

Address: 108 E. Sheridan St.
 Price: \$65,000
 Seller: Jana Britton
 Buyer: Patricia Dunaway
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 05-07-25

DIETERICH PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 47 property transfers in Dieterich in 2025, which totaled \$14,501,974. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 588.3 acres. There were 45 property transfers in Dieterich in 2024, which totaled \$8,394,934.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Dieterich in 2025, which totaled \$9,191,375.

Address: N. 2000th St.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$3,606,875
 Seller: Carol Behrns Estate
 Buyer: David W. Behrns
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 03-12-25



Address: E. 700th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$960,000
 Seller: The Richard E. Logan & Paula R. Logan Joint Tenancy Trust C/O Richard E. & Paula R. Logan
 Buyer: Bruce L. Lidy
 Revocable Trust C/O Bruce
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 04-21-25

Address: N. 2000th St.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$800,000
 Seller: David W. Behrns
 Buyer: Stephen J. Gray
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 07-07-25

Address: E. 400th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$800,000
 Seller: Stephen J. Gray
 Buyer: David W. Behrns
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 07-07-25

Address: E. 100th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$602,000
 Seller: Corrine E. Briscoe
 Buyer: Wyattte Brummer
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 01-27-25

Address: E. 100th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$602,000
 Seller: Corinne E. Briscoe
 Buyer: Scott Brummer
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 01-31-25

Address: E. 300th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$592,500
 Seller: Neal E. Merry
 Buyer: Brent A. Stortzum
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 01-10-25

Address: 304 N. Pine St.
 Price: \$438,000
 Seller: Kyle Williams
 Buyer: Christy Louise Wohltman
 Acres: 0.8
 Date recorded: 07-07-25

Address: 7619 N. 2000th St.
 Price: \$425,000
 Seller: Toby McMahon, ET AL
 Buyer: Timothy J. McMahon
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 06-10-25

Address: 314 Veterans Dr.
 Price: \$365,000
 Seller: B&E Developers, LLC
 Buyer: Timothy Edward Weber
 Acres: 0.4
 Date recorded: 06-09-25

EDGEWOOD PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 14 property transfers in Edgewood in 2025, which totaled \$1,401,150. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 57.6 acres. In 2024 there were 16 property transfers, which totaled \$3,546,140.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Edgewood in 2025, which totaled \$1,502,150.

Address: N. 600th St.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$200,000
 Seller: Donna Banning, as trustee of the Leonard M. Franklin and Dollie J. Franklin Joint Tenancy Trust dated August 30, 2006, as ammended and restated.
 Buyer: Toby K. Banning
 Acres: 20
 Date recorded: 06-25-25

Address: E. 50th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$198,500
 Seller: Estate of Ellen M. Clark
 Buyer: Scott Brummer
 Acres: 15
 Date recorded: 10-15-25

Address: 1206 Broad St.
 Price: \$178,000
 Seller: Timothy L. Behrman
 Buyer: Dean Webster
 Acres: 0.6
 Date recorded: 10-15-25

Address: 10289 E. 1175th Ave.
 Price: \$165,000
 Seller: Tiara Dorn
 Buyer: Dylan Rogers
 Acres: 2
 Date recorded: 08-18-25

Address: 802 Indiana St.
 Price: \$141,000
 Seller: Roger G. Fulk, Co-Executor
 Buyer: Dusty Jole Daryle Wright



Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 11-12-25

Address: 905 Oak St.
 Price: \$121,000
 Seller: Kierstyn Cain
 Buyer: Nathaniel Heath
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 09-17-25

Address: 612 Ash St.
 Price: \$72,650
 Seller: Effingham County Sheriff
 Buyer: Rack Properties, LLC
 Acres: 0.2
 Date recorded: 06-27-25

Address: 807 N. Ash St.
 Price: \$66,000
 Seller: Rack Properties, LLC
 Buyer: Samantha Larimer
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 04-16-25

Address: N. 500th St.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$65,000
 Seller: John Gillmore
 Buyer: Scott A. Brummer
 Acres: 18.3
 Date recorded: 10-30-25

Address: 605 Route 37
 Price: \$50,000
 Seller: Joshua James Kollman
 Buyer: Erica Warner
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 11-06-25

MASON PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 24 property transfers in Mason in 2025, which totaled \$5,655,020. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 408.4 acres. In 2024, there were 28 property transfers in Mason, which totaled \$5,648,194.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Mason in 2025, which totaled \$4,331,000.

Address: N. 1700th St.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$825,000
 Seller: Aaron Kincaid
 Buyer: Nicholas D. Wendling
 Acres: 71.7 acres
 Date recorded: 12-15-25



Address: E. 150th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$770,000
 Seller: Joshua P. Nelson
 Buyer: Quatman Properties, LLC-Series III
 Acres: 55
 Date recorded: 08-18-25

Address: 14211 E. 75th Ave.
 Price: \$570,000
 Seller: Lucas A. Bierman
 Buyer: Travis Wakefield
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 07-22-25

Address: 12170 E. 400th Ave.
 Price: \$500,000
 Seller: Florann Field, as trustee of the trust created under a trust agreement known as Daniel G. & Florann Field Trust dated May 17, 2005
 Buyer: Blake Mathewson Field
 Acres: 60.4
 Date recorded: 06-03-25

Address: 10387 E. 600th Rd.
 Price: \$380,000
 Seller: Howard K. Cain & Amy Jo Cain
 Buyer: (Not Listed)
 Acres: 19.3
 Date recorded: 05-13-25

Address: 1866 N. 1150th St.
 Price: \$316,000
 Seller: Lloyd & Kendra Gerald
 Buyer: Mackenzie & Nathan Baxter
 Acres: 3
 Date recorded: 11-06-25

Address: 11800 E. 400th Ave.
 Price: \$255,000
 Seller: Trenton Matthew Kreke
 Buyer: Dylan E. Webb
 Acres: 1
 Date recorded: 03-24-25

Address: E. 625th Ave.
 Price: \$250,000
 Seller: Douglas R. McCain
 Buyer: Kristopher R. McClelland
 Acres: 53
 Date recorded: 07-11-25

Address: 5117 N. 350th St.
 Price: \$240,000
 Seller: Jered K. Craig
 Buyer: James B. Fredlund
 Acres: 1
 Date recorded: 12-15-25

Address: E. 300th Ave.
 Price: \$225,000
 Seller: Charles A. Hayden III
 Buyer: Crescentw LLC, A Florida Limited Liability Company
 Acres: 24
 Date recorded: 11-26-25

MONTROSE PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 10 property transfers in Montrose in 2025, which totaled \$2,790,200. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 108.4 acres. In 2024, there were 10 property transfers in Montrose, which totaled \$518,100.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Montrose in 2025:

Address: 15727 N. 2300th St.
 Price: \$1,800,000
 Seller: Patricia J. Flach Estate
 Buyer: Kevin R. Miller
 Acres: 85
 Date recorded: 02-03-25

Address: E. 1600th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$316,000
 Seller: Patricia J. Flach Estate
 Buyer: Duane P. & Kristene J. Will
 Acres: 20
 Date recorded: 02-03-25

Address: 204 W. Oak Ave.
 Price: \$199,900
 Seller: Brad Jason Horton
 Buyer: Jennifer Lowery & Tyler Ball
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 09-16-25

Address: 15727 N. 2300th St.
 Price: \$190,000
 Seller: Kevin R. Miller
 Buyer: Colin William Beckman
 Acres: 0.5
 Date recorded: 06-05-25

Address: 310 W. Prairie Ave.
 Price: \$125,800
 Seller: Edward McClellan
 Buyer: Veeridian Enterprise, LLC
 Acres: 0.1
 Date recorded: 07-28-25

Address: 207 N. Montgomery St.
 Price: \$82,500
 Seller: Allie J. Case
 Buyer: Callaway D. Campton
 Acres: 0.2
 Date recorded: 09-02-25

Address: 111 W. Oak Ave.
 Price: \$25,000
 Seller: Lucille R. Flach
 Buyer: Steven W. Gray, Jr.
 Acres: 0.2



Date recorded: 03-19-25

Address: 203 S. Spring Creek Rd.

Price: \$23,000
 Seller: Lyle D. McKinney
 Buyer: JE Warehousing, LLC
 Acres: 2.4
 Date recorded: 08-11-25

Address: 207 N. Boyd St.

Price: \$15,000
 Seller: Larry G. Farrand
 Buyer: Steven Gray
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 04-17-25

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

Price: \$13,000
 Seller: David E. Campbell
 Buyer: Brent A. Will
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 08-19-25

SHUMWAY PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 12 property transfers in Shumway in 2025, which totaled \$3,638,175. Although

acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 215.54 acres. In 2024 there were 13 property transfers in Shumway, which totaled \$2,581,932.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Shumway in 2025, which totaled \$3,563,175.

Address: 9845 E. 1900th Ave.

Price: \$830,000
 Seller: William E. Bales
 Buyer: DST Transport, Inc.
 Acres: 3
 Date recorded: 07-07-25

Address: 8721 E. 1700th St.

Price: \$600,000
 Seller: David Parks
 Buyer: Luke & Braley Levitt
 Acres: 60
 Date recorded: 08-18-25

Address: 19260 N. 700th St.

Price: \$600,000
 Seller: Jack A. & Darlene C. Poff Joint Tenancy Trust
 Buyer: Jerry R. Jansen
 Acres: 2.7
 Date recorded: 09-02-25



Address: E. 1950th Ave.

Price: \$517,000
 Seller: Dee Newton A/K/A Darthamae Newton
 Buyer: Ronald E. Kelly
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 03-18-25

Acres: 0.2
 Date recorded: 12-15-25

Address: 9563 E. 2100th Ave.

Price: \$125,000
 Seller: Brenda Bridges, et al.
 Buyer: Blake Pree
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 10-17-25

Address: 18291 N. 400th St.

Price: \$250,000
 Seller: David Parks
 Buyer: Amanda Paige Pierce
 Acres: 5
 Date recorded: 06-18-25

Address: 206 S. 5th St.

Price: \$77,000
 Seller: Treva E. Bushue
 Buyer: Joseph P. Gour
 Acres: 0.34
 Date recorded: 08-15-25

Address: N. 850th St. (Address number not listed)

Price: \$200,000
 Seller: David Parks
 Buyer: Luke & Braley Levitt
 Acres: 20
 Date recorded: 08-18-25

TEUTOPOPOLIS PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 54 property transfers in Teutopolis in 2025, which totaled \$13,665,725. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 317.1 acres. In 2024 there were 66 property transfers in Teutopolis, which totaled \$5,171,715.

Address: N. 700th St. (Address number not listed)

Price: \$194,175
 Seller: Douglas R. Hankins
 Buyer: Michael J. Barns
 Acres: 2.3
 Date recorded: 02-20-25

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Teutopolis in 2025, which totaled \$5,171,715.

Address: 512 W. Main St.

Price: \$170,000
 Seller: Maxwell K. & Emily Konrad
 Buyer: Andrew & Sherry Lilley



Address: E. 1400th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$666,750
 Seller: Phillip H. Hartke
 Revocable Trust Agreement
 Buyer: Alexander Hartke
 Acres: 5
 Date recorded: 06-25-25

Address: E. 1500th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$638,250
 Seller: Kimberly A. Deters
 Buyer: Christopher J. Hartke,
 Trustee
 Acres: 69
 Date recorded: 12-31-25

Address: 809 S. Oak St.
 Price: \$525,415
 Seller: Fieldcrest
 Development, LLC
 Buyer: Ronald J. Fuesting
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 06-10-25

Address: 201 Morning Glory Ln.
 Price: \$511,000
 Seller: Adam Goeckner
 Buyer: Jacob Pals
 Acres: 0.5
 Date recorded: 06-09-25

Address: 14528 N. 1600th St.
 Price: \$500,000
 Seller: Crystal Storage, LLC
 Buyer: Midwest Storage, LLC
 Acres: 2
 Date recorded: 06-19-25

Address: 307 N. Columbus St.
 Price: \$487,000
 Seller: Mary Louise Esker
 Living Trust
 Buyer: Brendan O'Connor
 Acres: 0.2
 Date recorded: 05-29-25

Address: E. US Hwy 40
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$483,300
 Seller: Fidus Achates, LLC,
 An Illinois Limited Liability
 Company
 Buyer: Ruholl Family
 Properties, LLC, An Illinois
 Limited Liability Company
 Acres: 10.7
 Date recorded: 09-19-25

Address: 501 S. John St.
 Price: \$480,000
 Seller: Adam T. Hoene
 Buyer: Jason E. Roepke
 Acres: 0.5

Date recorded: 10-01-25
Address: 511 S. Oak St.
 Price: \$470,000
 Seller: Garrett L. Bartels
 Buyer: Virginia M. Merigold
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 11-18-25

Address: 705 S. Oak St.
 Price: \$410,000
 Seller: Balle Maison Homes,
 LLC
 Buyer: Lanae Koester
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 07-30-25

WATSON PROPERTY TRANSFERS

There were 31 property transfers in Watson in 2025, which totaled \$8,817,701. Although acreage is not listed for every transfer, the acreage listed came to 673.2 acres. In 2024 there were 28 property transfers in Watson, which totaled \$4,310,025.

Here are the top 10 property transfers in Watson in 2025, which totaled \$6,978,386.

Address: E. 700th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$2,012,000
 Seller: Mark Hochstetler &
 James D. Carpenter
 Buyer: 5E Farms LLC, An
 Illinois Limited Liability
 Company
 Acres: 195.6
 Date recorded: 12-17-25

Address: E. 700th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$1,791,486
 Seller: Mark A. Dyer As
 Surviving Joint Tenant Of
 Gloria S. Huckeby, Deceased
 (Parcel One)
 Buyer: Mark Hochstetler &
 James D. Carpenter
 Acres: 195.6
 Date recorded: 11-17-25

Address: 10965 E. 700th Ave.
 Price: \$1,200,000
 Seller: Ronald W. Zimmerman
 Buyer: TNH Properties, LLC
 Acres: 93.3
 Date recorded: 12-04-25

Address: E. 500th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$510,000
 Seller: Michael J. Brumleve
 Living Trust Dated March 5,
 2021
 Buyer: Joan M. Brumleve
 Living Trust Dated March 2,
 2006
 Acres: 80
 Date recorded: 10-29-25

Address: 5118 N. 1350th St.
 Price: \$310,000
 Seller: First Presbyterian
 Church of Effingham, Illinois
 Buyer: Alex Kreke
 Acres: 1.7
 Date recorded: 04-28-25

Address: 15573 E. 600th Ave.
 Price: \$245,000
 Seller: David Burton
 Buyer: Heath Siebert
 Acres: 12
 Date recorded: 06-05-25

Address: E. 550th Ave.
(Address number not listed)
 Price: \$240,000
 Seller: Nicholas B. Niemerg
 Buyer: Martin T. Fearday
 Acres: 40
 Date recorded: 03-21-25

Address: 300 Olive St.
 Price: \$229,900
 Seller: Logan Miller, et al
 Buyer: Jerrad A. R. Walker
 Acres: Not listed
 Date recorded: 07-29-25

Address: 300 Eastwood St.
 Price: \$220,000
 Seller: Jacqueline Danielle
 Ashbaugh
 Buyer: Travis Fry
 Acres: 0.5
 Date recorded: 07-18-25

Address: 103 Oak Dr.
 Price: \$220,000
 Seller: Patricia A. Miller
 Buyer: Gregory A. Rice
 Acres: 0.9
 Date recorded: 12-31-25



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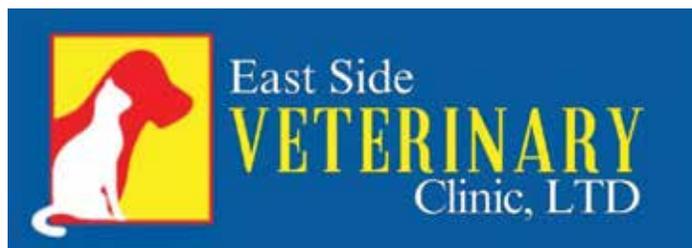
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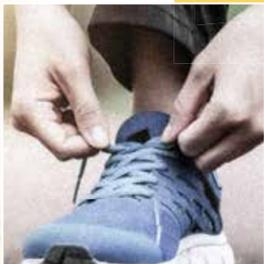


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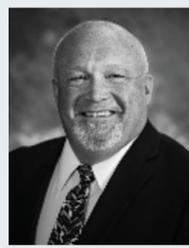
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