

CELEBRATING EFFINGHAM'S
GROWTH OVER THE YEAR

Progress

2019 EDITION

LEADING WOMEN

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Public officials
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Moms

Women across
Effingham County
play important roles
as the region
progresses toward
the future



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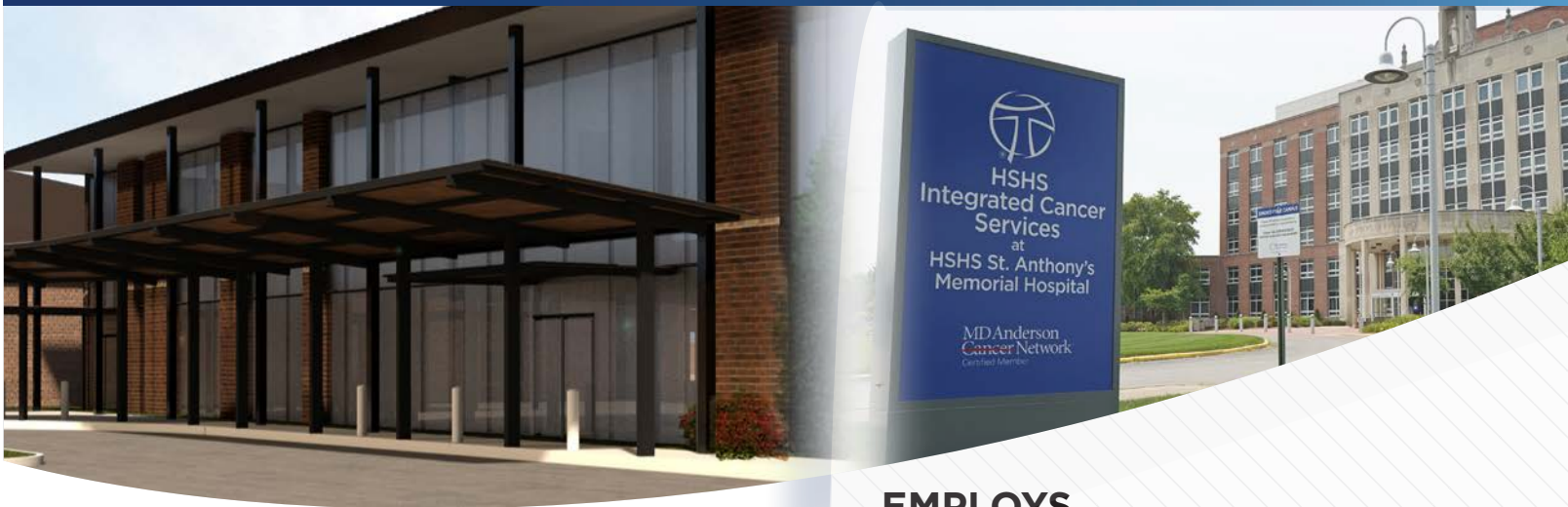
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Memorial Hospital

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IMPACT: \$144 million in economic activity

CAPITAL

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IMPACT: \$28.7 million in local and state economy

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IMPACT: \$153 million in local and state economy

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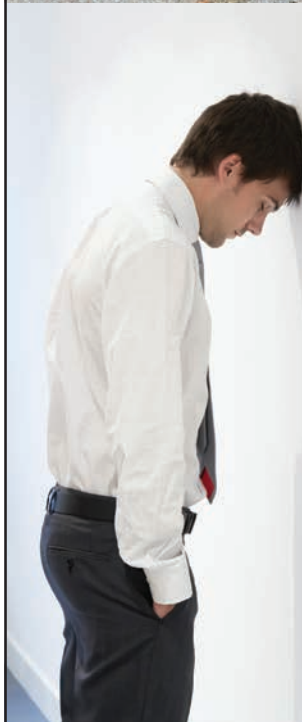
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			<small>*RE/MAX held 51.84% of the Market Share</small>

Statistical information was taken from the Decatur & Central, IL MLS and Illinois Association of Realtors



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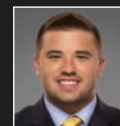
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Progress

2019 EDITION

AN EFFINGHAM DAILY NEWS PUBLICATION

COVER STORY



Effingham Daily News file photo

10 Leading Women

Fourth Circuit Chief Judge Kimberly Koester speaks during a 2017 Problem-Solving Court graduation while one of the four graduates, Joshua Durre, listens.

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ON THE COVER:

The Rev. Christine Cunningham, directing pastor of Centenary First United Methodist Church in Effingham. On the foldout is pictured the Rev. Jessica Baldyga, associate pastor of the church. Photo by Chet Piotrowski Jr. / Piotrowski Studios.

From the Editor

Women across Effingham County play important roles as the region progresses toward the future.

In the 2019 Progress, the staff of the Effingham Daily News focuses on just a few of the women who have contributed so much toward making our community what it is and what it will be.

There are still hurdles to jump. Many of those we interviewed might call that a challenge worth accepting.

Kelly Roepke and Erin Swingler are the president and vice president of the Y-Yard in Effingham, which they took over from their father.

"When I first started here, not only did we come into a male-dominated industry, but we were also the boss's daughters,



that's still the case."

Heather Mumma, the owner of B&B Homes, encourages women to know their strengths – and keep their eyes on their goals.

"I would like to see more women take

and so sometimes there could be double adversity with that and that was a challenge," Roepke says in our cover story. "I think that from day one, we had to work twice as hard to prove ourselves and, at times,

a leap of faith and realize they are capable and strong enough to do whatever they choose to pursue," said Mumma, who was elected to the Effingham County Board last year. "I don't want to see women have the mindset that they're at a disadvantage."

To be sure, women across our community give us all an advantage.

*Jeff Long
Editor*

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

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



Crystal Reed is a staff reporter for the Effingham Daily News who covers towns in the eastern coverage area such as Teutopolis, Dieterich, Montrose, Neoga and Sigel. She is a graduate of Richland Community College and Eastern Illinois University with degrees in journalism. She is originally from Decatur, Illinois.



Charles Mills is reporter and videographer for the Effingham Daily News. A 1983 graduate of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, he is the son of a south-central Illinois newspaper publisher, worked as master control director for a St. Louis television station, assistant video editor at a video editing facility on Music Row specializing in music-videos, served as senior video editor for a Nashville television station and learned the art of computerized video editing while living in Hollywood, California in the middle 80s. Mills is a native of Vandalia, where he lives with his wife, Zoryana.



Dawn Schabbing is a senior reporter at the Effingham Daily News, devoted to special projects, while also covering Effingham City Hall, Effingham Unit 40 and the community. A graduate of Lake Land College and Eastern Illinois University with degrees in journalism, she has worked in the newspaper field for more than two decades. She previously worked in news and features at the Journal Gazette and Times-Courier newspapers in the Mattoon and Charleston areas. She lives in Neoga with her husband, Paul.



Kaitlin Cordes is a reporter for the Effingham Daily News, covering Effingham County and law enforcement. She earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from Eastern Illinois University in May 2018. During college, she spent two summers as an intern at the EDN. Cordes is a native of Effingham, where she lives with her mother, Kayla, and sister, Kourtney.



Tyler McCluskey is a sports reporter for the Effingham Daily News. He is a graduate of Joliet Junior College and Eastern Illinois University with degrees in journalism. Tyler is originally from Joliet, but lives in Charleston.

LEADING

By Dawn Schabbing and Kaitlin Cordes

Taking top roles in business, community support, public service

WOMEN



Emily Drake sits with her daughter, Lily, 7, at their home.

Photo by Dawn Schabbing

Business leaders. Community advocates. Ministers. Mothers. Wives.

These are just a few of the many roles women throughout Effingham County take on as they give back to the community and also show support for other women looking to progress in fast-growing industries and beyond.

Several of the stories in the 2019 Progress Magazine, produced by the Effingham Daily News, look at women who have become leaders in a variety of ways across our community. This story and others chronicle how some local women do their part to fuel progress in Effingham County.

“I want moms to know they’re not alone, and provide a safe place where we can be real about the struggle and encourage one another to grow.”

Lindsay Sterchi
Motherhood blogger

Moms

One area mom encourages others to realize it’s OK if not everything gets done when you think it should be. It’s OK to know you won’t be perfect.

“It’s a juggling act in which you drop the balls all the time,” said Emily Drake, 33, of Effingham. “There are many times when dishes are piling up and laundry doesn’t get done as quickly as I’d like.”



Photo by Kaitlin Cordes

Y-Yard Vice President Erin Swingler, left, and President Kelly Roepke, right, are pictured at their family business in Effingham.

In addition to trying her best to keep up in motherhood and at her salon and at home, she finds time to help other moms who might be struggling in their ways.

"I have a few friends who pass my name along, and I'm always up for that," Drake said. "I like to try to encourage others. What works for us may not work for them, but it doesn't hurt to try. Every kid is different."

According to a 2017 New York Times article, some women try to imagine the "ideal mother." Striving for perfection and not reaching that conjured level of motherhood can cause feelings of shame and guilt.

Drake works to help women recognize that their best is good enough. If everything does not get done, there is nothing wrong with that.

She also tries to inspire everyone to find something positive in life. She sets aside a little time each week to reflect on the good things.

Lindsay Sterchi, 35, of Effingham, writes a blog about motherhood and faith that can be found at lindsaysterchi.com

When writing in social media and in her relationships with other moms, Sterchi tries to be real and honest about the day-to-day battles of being a mom of young kids.

"I want moms to know they're not alone, and provide a safe place where we can

"It's always rewarding when there are other females that can relate to the industry, but they also can relate to the challenge of working full time."

Kelly Roepke
President, Y-Yard

be real about the struggle and encourage one another to grow," said Sterchi. "I am a huge advocate for moms taking care of themselves – spiritually, emotionally and physically."

Salvaging career, family

When it comes to redefining women's roles in the work world, sisters Kelly Roepke, 44, of Effingham and Erin Swingler, 36, of Teutopolis are at the forefront in the Effingham area. They are the president and vice president of the Y-Yard in Effingham.

Each balances running a business, raising a family and more.

The sisters took over the salvage operation in 2007 after their father, Mike Nolan, suffered a ministroke that forced him to take a step back from the business. Nolan and his wife, Kathy, bought the salvage yard on July 1, 1970.

Roepke said when she and Swingler took charge of the salvage yard, they faced what she called "double adversity."

"When I first started here, not only did we come into a male-dominated industry, but we were also the boss's daughters, and so sometimes there could be double adversity with that and that was a challenge," Roepke said. "I think that from day one, we had to work twice as hard to prove ourselves, and at times, that's still the case."

Roepke and Swingler both earned degrees from Illinois State University. Roepke was a school teacher prior to becoming the Y-Yard president. Swingler had attended school for business, with the goal of working for her father.

Growing up the sisters received an education of sorts in the world of salvage. They traveled to early morning car auctions with their father when they were just 6 or 7 years old. When they got older, Roepke and Swingler worked through each department of the salvage yard – including the maintenance and dismantling departments.



Submitted photo

Effingham County Board Member Heather Mumma is shown in her official photo for the Effingham County Board.



Submitted photo

Shown are Heather Mumma's daughters, Veronika, 15, left, and Miriah, 24, right.

Despite years of schooling and numerous hours spent becoming well-versed in all things salvage, Roepke said she and her sister still experience adversity at times because of their gender.

The adversity plagued the sisters early in their careers, but Roepke said she does not see much of it today. She said the two have become respected faces of the industry, not only in Effingham, but across the country as well.

The sisters have served in numerous facets of the industry, including boards and committees, and as association members and speakers. Swingler feels finding their place in the salvage and automotive indus-

try was not as challenging as establishing their place in their own business.

Roepke and Swingler have taken their father's advice by surrounding themselves with good people in the business. She said the Y-Yard experienced a significant turnover when the two first took on leadership roles. But Roepke thinks she and her sister have remedied that by building a new team.

"We started to really build our own regime here and our own team. Here we are in 2019, and I think we've done some phenomenal things with the people we have here. We've built our own support system and powerhouse around us," Roepke said.

Swingler, a mother of three, and Roepke, a mother of two, have struggled with not only balancing the responsibilities of working and home, but say the guilt working moms and stay-at-home moms put on themselves is even harder.

"Of course, your family comes first, but it's a hard balancing act some days. I don't think people who aren't in business for themselves fully appreciate what it all entails," Swingler said. "We need to quit being so hard on ourselves. We don't have to be perfect, but we want to set good examples. Family does come first and takes priority, but some days it's a tough balancing act, especially in a small, family-owned business."

Roepke said building a strong network is key to growth and opportunity. Both have mentors who have played very important roles in their success, and they both agree that their father has been their best mentor.

"It's always rewarding when there are other females that can relate to the industry, but they also can relate to the challenge of working full time," Roepke said. "When I say full time, I don't mean full time. When you own a business, you're married to the business. It goes everywhere with you. So when you get home and you still have your responsibilities at home, whether you're a mother or a wife or a daughter or whatever it may be, it's difficult to balance at times."

Swingler and Roepke would like to let other women know that it's OK if some responsibilities – like tidying up at home – fall to the wayside. Roepke said that's when it's important to prioritize, and often, family is at the top of the list.

Swingler also wants female leaders to know that it will take time to find who you are, and that's OK. She has experienced

moments when she questioned how her own personality fit into running a business.

Swingler said once you find your strengths, it is important to find others who will fill in where one's weakest parts are.

"I think you just learn that you are who you are. You are made the way you are. Not everybody is a dominant personality, (and) not everybody is outgoing or extroverted. Some people are more patient, and there's nothing wrong with any of them," Swingler said.

"When you realize who you are and who you aren't, you need to find the people that can fill in the spots where those aren't your strengths."

Roepke and her sister use that model every day, complementing each other's weaknesses with their strengths. Roepke said understanding the way they both work helps in the work environment and creates trust and respect.

Swingler said women should not feel guilty for choosing to work a full-time job while having a family. She said it is something to be gratified by.

"We don't need to be perfect. So, I burnt the garlic bread for dinner and didn't get the ball uniform washed in time for the next game. We put a lot of pressure on ourselves and have to wear a lot of hats these days. Quit sweating the small stuff," Swingler said.

"But never sell yourself short of your goals. If you have big dreams, chase them. Be proud of your accomplishments," Roepke added.

Business owner, mom, public official

As a business owner and mother, Heather Mumma, 46, of Effingham can relate to Swingler and Roepke. Mumma purchased B&B Homes in 2014 from Dennis Boggs, whom she worked for as a sales manager for 19 years.

Most recently Mumma has also taken on the role of Effingham County Board member after she was elected to the position in November 2018. The mother of two and animal advocate said her new role as a public official has aided her in her dream of making an impact on the community.

"I'd like to think I'm bringing new vision and a light into the Animal Shelter and Control on the east end of town. We're feeling positive vibes. Our first priority there is to protect the people, and I think that in turn means protecting their pets," Mumma said. "Most of my energy is going to that. Also, within my business, I try to



Submitted photo

Serving as the President and CEO of HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital offers Theresa Rutherford opportunities to lead momentous occasions in the hospital's history. In March 2018, Theresa (right) helped unveil HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital's collaboration with MD Anderson Cancer Network. Among those participating in the sign unveiling were Crossroads Cancer Center physicians Dr. Hanna Saba (left) and Dr. Philip Dy (hidden by sign)

“One of the most rewarding things is when I get feedback from people that I’ve touched in the courtroom, whether that’s good, bad or indifferent.”

Kimberly Koester
Chief Judge of Fourth Circuit

help out as I can for those who have had various misfortunes in their lives.”

Mumma has also recently become a member of the Effingham Elks Lodge 1016. She also is a singer and has made it a goal for 2019 to combine her love for singing with her faith.

Mumma’s advice for mothers and women in general who are looking to start

a career or help in the community: Be unafraid.

“I would like to see more women take a leap of faith and realize they are capable and strong enough to do whatever they choose to pursue. I don’t want to see women have the mindset that they’re at a disadvantage,” Mumma said.

Judge your impact

Effingham County Resident Judge and Illinois Fourth Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Kimberly Koester, 55, of Effingham looks to make a difference in the community while supporting other women.

Koester hopes to impact the lives of females in the Effingham area by showing them they can indeed take on unconventional roles and be successful at them.

According to the National Association of Women Judges, women accounted for 32 percent of all judges across Illinois in 2018, totaling 307 female judges. Across the United States, women make up just 33 percent.

Despite the disparity in numbers, Koester has tried not to make her term as resident and chief judge about gender.

“When I ran for office, I tried not to

make it a male or female issue. I don’t know the exact reasons I got elected, but I’m certainly proud of the fact that I was the first female resident judge in Effingham County and then happy to be the first female chief judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit,” Koester said.

In addition to boosting judicial female representation, in the judiciary Koester also hopes to make an impact on the future generations in the area.

“I was raised in Effingham County. My family is here, and I came back and that’s one of the strongest impacts,” Koester said. “We want children and people that are raised here in Effingham County to feel like they want to come back and not just go away but come back and work and raise their families and be a contributing member of the Effingham community.”

Every day she enters and exits her judge’s chambers, Koester reads a quote hung on her wall. It reminds her that her actions as a judge affect people’s lives.

The quote reads: “Government, in the persons of judges, touches people more perceptively in the courtroom than any other point in their lives.”



Photo by Dawn Schabbing

The Rev. Christine Cunningham, directing pastor at Centenary First United Methodist, left, and the Rev. Jessica Baldyga, associate pastor, at Centenary United Methodist Church conference table.

Koester's favorite part of being a judge is knowing she can help others.

"One of the most rewarding things is when I get feedback from people that I've touched in the courtroom, whether that's good, bad or indifferent. I get the feedback from them, and they tell me that I made a difference in their life. That is the most rewarding part of my job," Koester said.

Charity begins at home

As the United Way Chief Professional Officer, Linda Hemmen, 49, of Teutopolis strives to give back to the community financially.

Hemmen leads the way for the organization. Her work with the United Way is all about helping the 24 partner organizations affiliated with the local United Way chapter.

"We always say make it a better place to live and work. I think if people are helping other people in some of the most difficult times, it gets them through it, and that's what we're here for," Hemmen said.

In her 15 years with the organization, Hemmen has seen so many people who need just the basic necessities that she says most people take for granted. Working with

"We're here to kind of try to educate people about what United Way is. Each United Way is governed locally, and that's something people don't realize."

Linda Hemmen

United Way Chief Professional Officer

the United Way has opened her eyes and heart to the different ways she can help others, even personally.

On the flip side of Hemmen's leadership role with United Way is education. Much of her duties include educating the community on what the United Way does.

"We're here to kind of try to educate people about what United Way is. Each United Way is governed locally, and that's something people don't realize," Hemmen said. "We determine how funds are spent. Ninety-nine percent of the funds stay local."

Hemmen said local programs apply for United Way funding every year, and she helps determine which programs to assist based on the number of people the program

serves within each town in Effingham County.

Hemmen said the fundraising United Way does for the programs not only helps the individuals aided by the programs but also the programs themselves.

"Basically, we educate (people), make them aware and ask for donations so that these agencies can focus on helping people. They don't have to focus so much on doing fundraising because they are struggling," Hemmen said. "A lot of them couldn't do it without United Way funds."

According to the United Way of Effingham County website, the local entity raised \$346,239 in its 2018 campaign, exceeding its \$315,000 goal. This was the second highest amount raised in the history of the

“I’ve also learned to build leadership teams that include people with talents and training different than my own.”

Theresa Rutherford

President and CEO of HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital

Effingham County United Way.

Hospital chief

Like Koester and Hemmen, President and CEO of HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital Theresa Rutherford of Effingham combines her passion for caring for others with her career.

Rutherford, 59, has been credited for leading the hospital in advancing technology, enhancing quality, increasing colleague engagement, improving the patient experience and reflecting transparency with community members.

Today’s chief executive officer of the HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital is the first secular woman leader for the medical facility in Effingham and said she believes in encouraging the best people to enter the health care field.

The first leaders of the hospital were religious women from the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, followed by several men that filled the role, until she was appointed to the helm. The hospital has been part of the Effingham community for more than 140 years.

While her career path came with struggles throughout the years, Rutherford said obstacles come for all people – men and women. How people view individuals sometimes causes barricades, which may not have been deserved.

“To overcome barriers, I incorporated my experiences, education and nursing training along the way,” said Rutherford. “I’ve also learned to build leadership teams that include people with talents and training different than my own. As an example, a mentor once told me that board members might not understand my training as a nurse, but they understand the training and education required to receive an MBA.”

She said the best thing about her career are the people. The toughest thing is bringing balance into her life.

“The best things are the people I have the opportunity to meet, serve, and work alongside,” said Rutherford. “Health care has a broad impact on the community. We get to interact with those who come for health care services; we live in and support the community; and we work with a diverse team of dynamic colleagues and physicians.

“I’m fortunate to get to blend my God-given talents and my education with my faith in service to all.”

Spiritual leaders

Other local women are also using God-given talents to serve others and a higher being through ministry. However, leading a ministry as a woman sometimes comes with adversity.

There are more women getting into ministry, but two local United Methodist Church pastors agree there are still lots of obstacles.

Paul Black, director of Communication Ministries with the UMC Illinois Great Rivers Conference, in Springfield, said clergywomen have been part of Methodism since John Wesley licensed Sarah Crosby to preach in 1761.

Although women were ordained in the Methodist tradition as early as the late 1800s, it was the May 4, 1956, General Conference vote for full clergy rights that forever changed the face of ordained clergy.

The Rev. Christine Cunningham, 61, of Effingham, directing pastor at Centenary United Methodist Church for the past 18 months, has been in ministry for 15 years. She entered the career in her 40s.

“In two churches at least that I’ve been appointed to, they didn’t want a woman and was adamant about it. In one church, that attitude remained that way until the bitter end,” Cunningham said.

In the second experience, Cunningham said she and the congregation ended up growing closer together during the spiritual journey with her at the pulpit.

But, in the Methodist Church, pastors periodically get assigned to a new church.

“Actually, it was very difficult to leave there – for all of us – we all had grown a lot together. It can be difficult, but it can be really rewarding when people make that shift in thinking and viewpoint, when it comes to women in ministry,” said Cunningham.

A 2012 National Congregations Study shows that 11 percent of those surveyed identified their head clergy member as a woman, a figure that hasn’t changed since 1998.

The United Methodist Church is among

the 14 major U.S. religions that ordain women, according to the study. The list also includes the Episcopal Church, Pentecostal Church of God, Presbyterian Church and more.

The Rev. Jessica Baldyga, 33, of Effingham is the associate pastor at the Centenary United Methodist Church. This is her second appointment.

“At my first appointment, I had a man who didn’t want a female pastor and made my life miserable,” said Baldyga. “I had some who at first didn’t want me there, but once they could see that I could preach, and lead a Bible study, they changed their minds.”

Baldyga said a woman who wants to lead a congregation should surround herself with other female pastors who are passionately called to ministry.

She said some male pastors won’t understand things women pastors will face, such as when someone tells you that you shouldn’t be at the pulpit because the scripture says women should be silent in church.

“Men won’t fully understand what that’s like. Women can support and encourage you amidst that. It is essential in the ministry,” said Baldyga.

While doing her best to balance life and family and church and church family, Baldyga is passionate about her career.

“It is hard to want to be present for your kids and your spouse, but also give as much as I can to the church,” said Baldyga. “Working through the balance is tough.” EDN



Photo by Dawn Schabbing
The exterior of the Centenary United Methodist Church in Effingham

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HAVE THE INTERNET AND SEARCH ENGINES SIMPLY BECOME THE YELLOW PAGES?

If you need a respected professional, where do you turn? In 2019, the internet of course. But when you make an open-ended request to a search engine, do you realize that the results are too often those professionals who have paid for their results position?

And while I am not referring to the paid ads, it is worth noting that the paid ads look less and less like the paid content they are. Now the paid ads are specifically designed to look like the unpaid, supposedly objective, search results. Obviously, it is confusing by design.

But even in the case of the unpaid search results, too often those professionals listed on the first page have paid an online marketer to assist them in achieving their search results ranking. Or, less experienced and less reputable professionals have paid an even less reputable firm to try to ensure that they appear near the top of a search. Which brings me to my Yellow Pages analogy.

Remember the days when a lawyer, accountant, auto repair facility or plumber paid big money to garner a cover or one of the first full-page ads or two-page ads in the Yellow Pages? We assumed that since they had such a presence, they must have been a successful, reputable firm, right? But over time, we learned the hard way: It is not necessarily so. Even the cover and full-page advertisers could turn out to be fly by night or soon to be bankrupt service providers.

With the Yellow Pages largely irrelevant today, we are always excited to learn of a new algorithm to help search results provide the most relevant results. But too often today, the firms at the top are simply those who pay the most to get there. And at least in the case of lawyers in central Illinois, depending upon the type of lawyer you are looking for, you may have only a 60% chance that the firms at the top should actually be at the top. In Chicago and other large metros, that chance is 10% or less.

Consumers, in general, are believers in peer-reviewed services or sites. Customer rating services and their related websites can be effective at judging customer service or to discuss uniquely poor service. But I have always wondered how someone who has only hired one divorce lawyer in their life—and may have had unrealistic expectations of that lawyer going into the engagement—can accurately assess a lawyer's credentials. I usually dismiss their online rantings.

The same would have to be true for someone judging a business consultant, CPA or a plumber. Of course, if you have had the misfortune to use four different plumbers and one clearly shines above the others, that customer rating would be valuable to me. I hope this is something you will consider the next time you do an internet search.

And please be assured that I don't write this from a position of sour grapes. Our website, LeadingLawyers.com, is usually in the top 5 or top 10 for sure for nearly every downstate Leading or Emerging Lawyer. But I am concerned in general for less informed consumers who think that they can trust the internet search results. The adage remains, buyer beware!

Scott C. Anderson
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Women in Leadership

HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital

Since its foundation, women have played a major role in leadership at HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital. From its beginnings, Hospital Sisters served as the Administrators of St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital, until they transitioned leadership of the hospital to the laity in 1985. The current hospital President and CEO is Theresa Rutherford, who has served in this role since 2013. The Hospital Sisters remain committed to HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital: Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, a Public

Juridic Person approved by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Vatican City, on July 2, 2015, and the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis is the Founding Institute. The leadership team of the Hospital Sisters maintains three Reserved Powers over Hospital Sisters Ministries and retains sole authority over it. Additionally, Sister Ritamary Brown, OSF, serves on the hospital's Board of Directors.

Amongst the hospital's leadership Team, female leaders are the majority on the hospital's 40-member leader-

ship team, with 31 women serving in leadership roles, 77 percent of the team. Vicki Kloeckner, director of Human Resources, shared, "Health care has traditionally been a predominantly female profession, particularly in the nursing realm. But additionally, we are proud of the fact that there is quite an opportunity for advancement in our organization for all colleagues. Our leadership team is strong because of the combined gifts and strengths of all members of our leadership team."

St. Anthony's Chief Nursing Officer and HSHS Southern Illinois Division



Vicki Kloeckner



Kelly Sager

Chief Nursing Executive, Kelly Sager, shared about what an opportunity for advancement women have in the health care arena. Sager started at St. Anthony's in 1996 as a nurse and steadily progressed through management to her current position. "There are not many professions where women have so much opportunity to advance in their careers as we are fortunate to have in health care," Sager said. "Additionally, health care providers who work closest to the patient as they move their way into leadership take the wealth and depth of experience with them. Handling a variety of critical situations really provides a person with the skills to handle many leadership responsibilities simultaneously; it helps give you a unique perspective," she explained.

Executive Director of Nursing Operations Bobbi Kinkelaar is familiar with the experience of many of the nurses who work under her leadership. Kinkelaar worked in a variety of departments

and various nursing capacities at St. Anthony's throughout her career – nursing on hospital units, leadership roles in various departments, and serving as Clinical Nursing Director prior to her current position. "Having the experience of working in all these positions and all these departments, I feel gives me a true empathy for the needs of all of our patients, which helps me guide our nurses to provide the best possible care."

Jennifer Wilson, manager of the hospital's Medical and Orthopedic units, also has advanced her career at St. Anthony's, with the support of the organization. Wilson started in 2007 as a Certified Nursing Assistant and then obtained her associate's degree in nursing from Lake Land College in 2009. She has worked her way up at St. Anthony's, as an Intensive Care Unit nurse, House Supervisor, Supervisor of the Medical Care Unit, to her current management position. Wilson has been able to advance her career through support given by St. Anthony's,

as HSHS offers tuition reimbursement benefits to help colleagues who desire to advance their education. Through this support, she has been able to pursue and achieve her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing (BSN), and is currently obtaining her Master's degree from McKendree University. Wilson was able to advance her education through online courses. Wilson shared, "The online classes made it possible for me to complete both my BSN and now my Master's degree while also working full time. It means a lot to me to work for an organization that supports me in advancing my education and career."

For more information about HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital, visit the hospital's web site at stanthonyshospital.org.



Bobbi Kinkelaar



Jennifer Wilson

WOMEN ATHLETIC directors meet challenges

**“I love to go watch.
I love to go cheer
the kids on.”**

Laurie Thompson
Teutopolis Athletic Director

By Tyler McCluskey

Transportation. Scheduling. Rescheduling. Helping student athletes grow.

Women who head athletic departments at area high schools say the job is no more difficult for them than it is for their male counterparts. It is, however, just as rewarding.

For a region that loves its high school sports, Laurie Thompson in Teutopolis, Peggy Bueker in Altamont, and Carolyn Wendte at Cowden-Herrick/Beecher City have shown they know how to keep their departments running smoothly.

Laurie Thompson **Teutopolis**

Thompson's reign as athletic director in Teutopolis began in March 2018, when she took over for Mike Wilson, who was on medical leave. She was offered the job in June.

Thompson loves sports, so for her the job could not be any better.

“I love to go watch. I love to go cheer the kids on,” Thompson said.

But the job is about more than sports. As

head of the athletic department, Thompson juggles having officials in the right place, transportation, and keeping everything organized.

Thompson said that organization is key, and was one of the hardest things to adjust to in her early days on the job.

“A lot of things come up. Try and find enough time in the day to not only do your job but also get out and see the coaches and see the kids,” Thompson said.

She recalls how the weather made her start difficult in March.

“We had over 40, close to 50 cancellations in the spring,” Thompson said. “I got to do that, which was fun. We got over half of them rescheduled back, but that was about it. There wasn't enough days left.”

Thompson said that weather is not as big a factor in the winter, unless there is snow. Spring and fall sports are when schedules have to be juggled the most.

Thompson said she is pretty organized. She has been teaching for 27 years. She splits her time evenly between teaching and athletics. She loves the interaction with the kids. She teaches biology, chemical

science and physical education.

“It's a nice break. I like going into the classroom. I like the teaching part of it,” Thompson said. “I have a pretty good schedule, then in the afternoon I get to come be the AD.”

The most exciting part of being the AD to her is seeing the kids.

“You want to mentor them. You want them to grow up to be productive citizens. Teachers are a huge part of that,” Thompson said. “They spend 180 days with us throughout the year, and I think we are a big influence on them. You want to be a positive influence. And sports is just an outreach of that. Kids love to see their teachers at their sporting events, cheering them on. I get to have the best of both worlds.”

Thompson doesn't see much difference between men and women heading high school athletic programs.

“I've been fortunate. We've had some really nice and good athletic directors here (at Teutopolis), that I could learn from,” she said. “Honestly, I would look more at things detailed, maybe. Sometimes women are that way. ‘The floor is dirty. We need to sweep the floor,’ I look at silly things like that.

“I really don't know. We had female athletic directors and we had male athletic directors. As long as they know they got your back and they are working for your coaches, that is the main thing.”

Carolyn Wendte **Cowden-Herrick/Beecher City**

Wendte has been at CHBC for 30 years, taking over as AD 12 years ago. She teaches math and drivers ed. She's also the head girls basketball coach. Sometimes she even drives the bus.

One big challenge for her was when the two schools formed their athletic co-op.



Laurie Thompson, the athletic director in Teutopolis, and the Lady Shoes

"The transportation was one of the bigger things," Wendte said. "Also, coming up with a handbook."

The hardest part for her starting out was trying to get into a routine. She taught and had to learn the kids. They didn't have basketball when she started at CHBC.

"I know that was one of the questions starting out that my superintendent said, 'If you could change one thing about Beecher City, what would you do?' And I said, 'I'd like to have a basketball team,'" Wendte said. "When I was starting out, I was coaching fifth and sixth grade basketball, junior high scholar bowl, high school cheerleading, and softball. Those were my extracurriculars, back when I first started out."

But for Wendte, the most exciting and best part about holding the AD position is knowing that the kids have something to do.

"A lot of times, I think that kids go down the wrong path because they are not active in the sports. And it's just not about the sports, it's about the different activities that we offer," Wendte said. "I think parents are a little bit frustrated and always worried that their kids are going to get bogged down and their grades are going to go down. The longer I've taught, the more the kids are in, and the more responsible they are."

Wendte likes to watch the kids get along with the other area kids. In the long run, she said that is what it comes down to – besides being taught to win – being friendly and watching everyone come together.

With Wendte's many roles at CHBC, she said she requires very little sleep as she balances all the other things she has to do.

"I'll get here at 6:15 in the morning. I usually go home around 10 at night," she said. "And when I go home, I still have to grade math papers."

"I don't require a lot of sleep, but it's what I love. That is why I got into teaching and it's all about helping the kids. I still wouldn't do anything different."

Wendte said the men she deals with in sports have gotten used to having a woman heading the program.

"Once they know me, I think they know that I'm going to pretty much take charge, and I'm not going to take crap," Wendte said. "I'm old man on the totem pole. I've been there, done that, and I think that they learned that I'm going to stand up no matter what happens."

Peggy Bueker Altamont

Bueker got the position in Altamont due

to unforeseen circumstances. Last year during the National Trail Conference Tournament, Todd Arnold, who was the athletic director for Altamont High School, died in an accident.

So things were different for her than most new athletic directors. The person she was taking over for was not there to answer questions, like "What's been done before?"

"Everything was hunt-and-peck to find it," Bueker said. "What was done for scheduling? Officials and games and things like that."

She credited the people she was around for helping her during her first months as the AD.

"Other athletic directors, they helped me and answered lots of questions," Bueker said. "If it wasn't for them and the people at Altamont High School, I don't think I would have overcome it. But people have been very good to me."

When Arnold died, Bueker said the officials association sent out an email to all the people within the association to help out and get officials to games.

Bueker is also the assistant principal at

Altamont High School. She said balancing the two titles was the biggest learning curve.

"I came from the classroom to start doing this," Bueker said. "You show up and you think you're going to get 'I'm going to get this stuff done,' and you don't even open those books up because something pops up with discipline or something on the AD side. It's worth it – a lot more time, but it's good time. I enjoy what I do."

Like Wendte and Thompson, Bueker said the kids are what make her job as athletic director worthwhile.

"I'm a big sports person and have been my entire life," Bueker said. "It's fun to see kids make transition from when they are a freshman and moving up. Even kids from other schools, to see how they've progressed and see them show some passion and their personality on the floor. That is the best part of it." **EDN**

Editor's Note: Donetta Ohnesorge, the athletic director at Dieterich High School, declined to be interviewed for this story.



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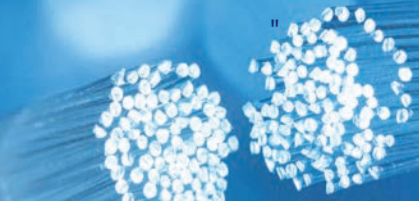


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Greenup is home to a bustling community of over 1,500 residents and plenty of businesses to help employ and contribute to the town. The most recent addition to this great community has been a LOVE’S Travel Stop and Country Store. LOVE’S is a travel center that contains an IHOP Express, Chester’s Chicken, a general store and a gas station. This is a full service business with a lot of potential in Greenup. With its convenient location right along Interstate 70, this travel center has already helped to bring in a lot of traffic and visitors from all over. With a unique town must come a unique LOVE’S as this is the largest one in the United States!

There is so much more to this town aside from the LOVE’S Travel Stop and Country Store. Other great opportunities range from small shops and restaurants that dot the downtown to EVAPCO, Inc., a manufacturer that employs over 400 people. Feeling hungry? Greenup has a variety of restaurants with tasty home-style recipes. In

addition to all the businesses, Greenup also offers several churches for many different denominations and a fantastic library with over 18,500 items for your entertainment and reading pleasure. Haughton Park, located on the north side of Greenup, offers a great place for family and kids with two ball diamonds, tennis court, playground equipment and provides a nice setting for gatherings and reunions.

As you walk through the streets of Greenup, you can begin to see the character that makes this town special. Greenup is considered a gem to more than just the natives of Greenup as the town’s business district has the honor of being listed on the national registry of historic buildings and their main street is also part of the historic National Road. To add to the life and character of the downtown area, the Municipality of the Village of Greenup funded a construction project in 2016 that repaired, refurbished and painted all seven of the porches that are part of the downtown business district. These gorgeous old style porches that dot the downtown area add to Greenup’s unique history and ambiance and are sure to lift the spirits of residents and visitors alike.

The Cumberland County school district, located just outside of town,

prepares area students to become smart, successful and contributing citizens. There are award-winning colleges nearby for those interested in continuing their education including Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, IL and Lake Land Community College in Mattoon, IL. Both are less than an hour from Greenup.

The town of Greenup with just over 1,500 residents is a perfect place for anyone wanting to be part of a friendly and thriving community while enjoying a small town lifestyle. If you are looking to get away for just a few hours on the weekend, you don’t have to travel far to find more shopping and dining opportunities with Effingham just 30 miles west of Greenup, Charleston less than 30 miles north of Greenup and Terre Haute, Indiana less than an hour to the east. This makes Greenup a perfectly centralized location for anyone looking to locate in a small town while also enjoying city conveniences.

For more information about Greenup, visit www.villageofgreenup.com or call 217-923-3401.





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JULIE STEPHENS

manages the Effingham County Farm Bureau

'You can't do that. That's a man's job'

By Kaitlin Cordes

Effingham County Farm Bureau Manager Julie Stephens has dedicated 22 years of her life to the county branch, serving as the ECFB's first and only female manager.

The Effingham resident recalls a time when being a female farm bureau manager was an uncommon role.

"There weren't very many female managers in the state when I first started. Now, females dominate," Stephens said. "There's more female managers, I think, in the state now than there was when I started."

According to the Illinois Farm Bureau's website, 53 counties employ female farm bureau managers. Among them are Clay, Cumberland, Effingham, Fayette and Shelby counties. There are just two women serving as county farm bureau presidents. They are in Coles and Cook counties.

Despite over two decades of serving in a farm bureau leadership role, Stephens' plans weren't always driven toward that career path. The Peoria-area native attended a community college near her hometown, then went on to graduate from Illinois State University with a bachelor's degree in science, with a major in speech communications.

In 1996, Stephens lived in an apartment building above a lady employed with the Bloomington Farm Bureau. Stephens said it was that neighbor who encouraged her to give the Farm Bureau a try.

"She said, 'Why don't you try putting in your résumé for farm bureau manager?' and I said I don't know what they do," Stephens recalled.

Having grown up on a grain and livestock farm just north of Peoria, Stephens decided to give the Farm Bureau a try. As a Farm Bureau manager trainee, Stephens said she traveled around the state with other Farm Bureau managers for 10 months when the Effingham County Farm Bureau began interviewing trainees for the manager position.



Photo by Kaitlin Cordes

Effingham County Farm Bureau Manager Julie Stephens is shown in front of the Illinois Farm Bureau logo at her office in Effingham.

Stephens was hired a year after she began her stint in the Farm Bureau, and she said Effingham County is the only Farm Bureau she has managed. The mother of six said what she's truly enjoyed most about her job is being able to combine her love of farming with her passion for helping others.

"Growing up on a farm, it's rewarding to me to realize that I'm helping farmers. If I'm not going to be on the farm, this is the second best thing to it," Stephens said. "I enjoy being able to work for a non-profit that works to help educate farmers and help them in their operation."

While Stephens is the leader at the Effingham County Farm Bureau, she gives all of the credit to her staff and volunteers, who she describes as a "stand-up group" and "class act."

Stephens has also seen the agriculture

industry transform into a more gender-neutral field. She said she hasn't faced any backlash or obstacles as a female manager, but she remembers one specific incident when her work as a manager was called into question.

"Ironically enough on my first tour when I graduated college, and I got the job with Farm Bureau, I was telling my grandmother, who is also a farmer, and I said I was going to be a Farm Bureau manager. She said, 'Well you can't do that. That's a man's job,'" Stephens said with a laugh.

"The farming community tends to be more conservative-minded, and so, if you were going to have some adversity, you would think you would experience it in a more conservative arena, but I haven't."

Stephens works with and has seen other strong women in agricultural roles, too. Recently, the Future Farmers of America

had its first all-female team of Major State FFA Officers, including Taylor Hartke of Teutopolis.

The Effingham County Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom program is also led by a female. Stephens oversees the program coordinated by Lisa Zumbahlen.

Stephens would like to see more women seek leadership roles in the Farm Bureau's volunteer sector, the board of directors and more. She predicts the role of women in the Farm Bureau and in agriculture will continue to grow for years to come.

"I think as long as they work hard and focus on the goals of the organization, they will ultimately be fine. Do what you're asked to do, and help motivate people and show appreciation for your leader, and I don't think anybody will care if you're a woman or not," Stephens said.

In her role as the manager, Stephens described herself as a "jack of all trades but master of none." She said her job includes organizing benefits for members, organizing speakers for educational events, promoting Farm Bureau events, helping farmers sort through legislative issues, connecting legislators with agricultural constituents and more.

Most recently, Stephens was asked to organize events for the Effingham County Farm Bureau's 100th anniversary. The yearlong anniversary recognition included events, such as the mayor and community leaders goat milking contest held in June 2018.

Stephens said perhaps one of her most important duties as the Farm Bureau manager is representing the farmers.

"We consider ourselves the voice of agriculture, so sometimes people look to us for answers and sometimes we have to seek those out with other experts. It's also telling the farmer's story through media, through publications (and) through public events," Stephens said.

One of the biggest challenges Stephens said she faces as the Effingham County Farm Bureau manager is not being able to answer a member's question right away. She said that's when she reaches out to other Farm Bureaus and the state organization to help answer those questions.

"It's just frustrating for me that I don't know (an answer) off the top of my head to provide them instantly and that I have

"It's neat to see women in agricultural leadership especially. It's just nice that the industry is welcoming gender neutrality."

Julie Stephens

Effingham County Farm Bureau Manager

to seek out another source for. I'm grateful there is a resource to back me up and help me out," Stephens said of the state organization.

Another large part of Stephens' work with the Farm Bureau involves agricultural legislation. She said when it comes to legal changes in ag, her job is to encourage farmers to get involved in the legislative process and to contact their legislators in order to form a good working relationship.

Stephens explained when an agriculture bill is introduced to the Illinois General Assembly, it is reviewed by a legislative staff at the Illinois Farm Bureau. After its review, the bill comes down to the county Farm Bureau level, and that is when Stephens tries to navigate what issues these bills may cause local farmers.

Stephens said it is also important for the Farm Bureau to educate legislators on how the bills they are introducing and ultimately passing affect farmers.

Perhaps the most important aspect of her job is getting young people involved in agriculture because they are the future of the industry, Stephens said.

"We're also working with our young farmers to try to get them more involved and just trying to provide them with tools

that they need when it's time for them to take over the farm.

Stephens said the Farm Bureau does this through its Ag in the Classroom program, farming safety courses for the youth and reaching out directly to young people whether it be at the Effingham County Fair or Farm Bureau events.

Though her job comes with many responsibilities, Stephens said she enjoys every second of it. She enjoys her co-workers and the farmers she serves the most because they have become her family.

In addition to being Farm Bureau manager, Stephens also serves on the Effingham Noon Rotary in a variety of positions. She is the co-chair for the annual Rural/Urban Luncheon and is the weekly program chairwoman.

As women's roles in agriculture continue to grow, Stephens said she has one piece of advice to females seeking leadership positions like her own.

"I hope that these women do not feel hindered or held back by the fact that they are a woman," Stephens said. "It's neat to see women in agricultural leadership especially. It's just nice that the industry is welcoming gender neutrality." **EDN**



File photo

Julie Stephens, Noon Rotary weekly program chairwoman, far right, is pictured with, from left, the 2017 Effingham County Fair Queen Maria Lueken and Effingham County Fair Board President Phil Hartke following a 2018 Effingham Noon Rotary meeting.

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The vision of a local ambulatory surgery facility began with the humble

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

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

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

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This year, St. Anthony's will solemnly recall the 70th anniversary of the fire that occurred in April 1949 where 77 lives were tragically lost. In addition to the overwhelming community support that was shown in the days, weeks and months after the fire, the Hospital Sisters demonstrated their leadership by estab-

lishing an emergency hospital from their existing convent. This facility served the community for more than three years, while preparations were made to build a new hospital. The Hospital Sisters joined with countless others to financially support the construction of the new St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital, which still stands today.

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FEMALE LEADERS

share advice for young women

Chief Professional Officer
Coroner
Library Director
Chief Judge

By Kaitlin Cordes

Four area women who can be seen as local pacesetters have advice for young ladies seeking a leadership role in the community: Set your mind to it and go for it.

Linda Hemmen

United Way Chief Professional Officer Linda Hemmen can remember a time in her life when she questioned her life goals and purpose.

“I was working at a full-time corporate administrative position before I came here, and I had two grandparents that passed away within a month of each other,” Hemmen said. “It makes you think about, ‘What’s your purpose in life?’”

“It’s to do what we can to help people,” Hemmen said of her journey to becoming the United Way CPO.

If she could tell women seeking leadership roles one thing, Hemmen said it would be to let them know finding the one job or venture that will make you happy helps to keep the initial enthusiasm and excitement. She said women should not let anything hold them back from that ideal career or position.

Hemmen had previous experience working with the United Way at her previous job. She was told about the opening and decided to take the leap.

Hemmen has served as the local organization’s CPO for 15 years, and the Teutopolis area native said she has definitely found her calling. Though she is not the first female CPO, the United Way has made great strides since Hemmen took the helm.

The United Way currently serves 24 local partner agencies, and its fundraising total continues to grow. When she started in 2004, the United Way raised \$186,000. Now the United Way has raised over \$300,000.

One of Hemmen’s main roles as the United Way CPO is to spread the word about the organization. She aims to help educate the community about United Way,



Photos by Kaitlin Cordes

Effingham County Coroner Kim Rhodes works in her office at the County Office Building in downtown Effingham.

as well as its partner agencies and their causes.

Hemmen is also a liaison of sorts for the United Way Board of Directors, as well as a voice for the organization’s partner agencies. While she has not faced much adversity as a female in a leadership position, she has had some struggles with conflicting ideas on the board of directors.

“We have 20 board members, so we have men and women and sometimes some people may not be open to change or wanting to try new things. I guess sometimes that’s probably the hardest part,” Hemmen said. “It’s the different personalities and getting everyone to keep the goal in mind. We’re here to raise as much as we can.”

Hemmen uses a somewhat nontraditional approach to her work at the United Way. Even though the organization is not for profit, she takes a business approach and uses a business model to help keep expenses down and to fulfill the wishes of

the board of directors.

Hemmen said that though this model isn’t the stereotypical route a not-for-profit takes, it has aided the organization’s growth.

“We’ve grown a lot throughout the years. When you make progress, it’s going to take little steps to get there, and even if you have a setback, don’t let it hold you back,” Hemmen said.

Kim Rhodes

Effingham County Coroner Kim Rhodes has seen her share of setbacks and obstacles, like Hemmen and other women in leadership roles. The Effingham County resident was elected to the coroner’s position in November 2018, after the death of Duane Guffey.

She follows in the footsteps of another female coroner in the county, Leigh Hammer, who served prior to Guffey.

Rhodes comes from a line of professions



United Way Chief Professional Officer Linda Hemmen is pictured in her office at the United Way facility in Effingham.



Effingham Public Library Director Amanda McKay stands between bookshelves at the library.

that are predominantly male, so stepping into another male-dominated role is nothing new to her. Rhodes served as an Illinois State Police trooper for 25 years, and when she served as an officer in Decatur in 1977, she was the only female officer out of 25 on the force.

"I think initially, there was a little skepticism with me being a female officer. That changed pretty quick," Rhodes said. "It was a great bunch of officers. They didn't treat me any different than anybody else."

Rhodes has received that same kind of respect as Effingham County's newest coroner. The 2018 election had some bumps along the way, but Rhodes said she would not change it for anything.

Prior to the election, Rhodes and Hammer met and talked about Hammer's experiences in the role. Rhodes said she received Hammer's full support, as well as a sounding board for her future endeavors as the coroner.

Though she is just beginning her stint as the coroner, Rhodes has found her relationship with other elected officials and agencies to be ones filled with respect.

"I have a feeling that we have a great working relationship with all of the agencies we've dealt with in the coroner's office," Rhodes said. "I've been officer here, and I've lived and worked in this community for a long time, so as far as any issues as far as being a female in office, there is none."

Rhodes has worked to make the coroner's office an accessible entity that is

"We've grown a lot throughout the years. When you make progress, it's going to take little steps to get there, and even if you have a setback, don't let it hold you back."

Linda Hemmen
United Way Chief Professional Officer

available to the public not just in instances where someone has passed away -- something Rhodes said is somewhat new to the office.

Rhodes credits her siblings and parents for making her the person she is today -- a strong female leader. She said it's those lessons her parents taught her -- and her brothers raising her to be tough -- that has helped her in every aspect of her careers.

"I grew up with nine brothers. There's nothing (anyone) can do that my brothers didn't do to me. My brothers raised me tough," Rhodes said. "My dad taught me to work until the job's done, and my mom taught me love and patience."

Amanda McKay

When it comes to women seeking leadership positions, Effingham Public Library

Director Amanda McKay recommends finding other strong females to learn from.

"First, I would say, don't be afraid to just go for it. Don't assume that you can't do it just because no other women have done it before you or there haven't been very many," McKay said. "Also, definitely find other women to talk to. Find other mentors, either in your profession or in the community, that you can look to and just have as a sounding board."

McKay has been the library director for eight years. She's backed by a strong team of both women and men who have worked to make the library a pillar of the community. She said the library staff has worked hard to create a team with a wide range of personalities and talents.

McKay said one of the most challenging obstacles she's faced as the library director is people's expectations for her time spent working. She said this can make it a complicated task to balance being an effective leader and having personal time.

"Just generally speaking, it can sometimes be challenging because people might have certain expectations either on your time or how you have allocated your time or what you're available to do or what you're capable of doing," McKay said.

"I find a lot of it has to do with more of making assumptions about how I want to prioritize my time in the work world. I feel like, as a woman, you have to just make yourself even more available, which has its detriments, too, because you have to set time aside for that down time so you can be

Judge Kimberly Koester is shown behind the bench in a courtroom inside the Effingham County Courthouse.

an effective leader.”

McKay follows a long line of strong female Effingham library directors. Though library director wasn’t her initial choice for a library profession, McKay said she is happy she took the opportunity to step out of her comfort zone and apply for the position.

McKay’s career started in an Illinois regional library system, where she worked as a consultant. After her job with the regional system ended, she came across an opening at the Effingham library.

“I wasn’t sure because I never managed anybody before,” McKay said. “There were a lot of aspects that would have been new to me. I decided to just go ahead and take that leap and let the people interviewing me make that decision.”

Since becoming the library director, McKay said she is glad to see more women in leadership roles, both at the library and in the community. She noted several women who ran for offices in the November 2018 election and those who have already taken on prominent business, community and leadership roles.

McKay said she hopes to see that growth continue throughout the community, too.

“We have a lot of women that are coming up in the ranks in different businesses, so I just think it’s really important that the opportunity is there to be able to take. I guess my hope would be that people that want to take leadership roles have the opportunity to do so in whatever that looks like,” McKay said.

Kimberly Grace Koester

Effingham County Resident Circuit Judge Kimberly Grace Koester could not agree more. Koester hopes females take the opportunity to dive into nontraditional roles.

“I know lots of women who would be a great judge if given the opportunity to do that, so I guess my suggestion would be if you have any desire to practice law or to be in a judicial role, do it. Do not be afraid of taking on that role,” Koester said.

Koester has served as the Effingham County resident circuit judge for over 12 years, and most recently, she was selected as the chief judge for the Illinois Fourth



“We don’t have to be in traditional female roles. I think that’s probably one of my biggest impacts that I’m happy to bring to Effingham County.”

Kimberly Koester
Chief Judge of the Fourth Circuit

Judicial Circuit. In that role, she presides over 20 judges in Christian, Montgomery, Shelby, Fayette, Effingham, Jasper, Clay, Marion and Clinton counties.

Koester grew up in a family of attorneys as her father James Parker, grandfather and great-grandfather all served as Effingham attorneys. Koester’s brother, Kevin Parker, is currently an associate judge in the Effingham court system.

Koester said she knew she always wanted to be a lawyer and experienced no adversity during her journey to becoming a lawyer. She said her biggest struggle came at a heavy cost.

“Really the only struggle that I had was my parents, James and Patricia Parker, were both killed in a car accident when I was 17,” Koester said. “My brother and my two sisters and I were on our own, so I went to college and law school and took the bar (exam) and went on all without having parents. It was a battle.”

Since her parents’ passing, Koester has flourished in her profession. Koester was elected as the first female resident circuit judge in Effingham County in 2008 and was unanimously selected by an all-male panel of circuit judges to obtain her title as the first female chief judge in the Fourth Judicial Circuit in 2017.

Koester said since she was elected 11 years ago, she has seen female representation grow in the Effingham area.

“Currently, in Effingham County, I think that women are pretty fairly represented in the legal profession. We’ve got various female attorneys that are very strong and very, very good in their profession,” Koester said.

“In the judicial role, out of the Fourth Judicial Circuit, there are only three female judges out of all of us, so it is my hope that we have more women in the future in the judicial roles at some point in time. In our Fourth Judicial Circuit, we are underrepresented.”

Koester is proud to be a trailblazer in the Effingham community and beyond.

As a resident circuit judge and chief judge, Koester said she believes she is making an impact, especially for women.

“My impact is that women can be in these roles, and women can be in law and can be strong lawyers. They can be strong judges, and they can be strong advocates in the community,” Koester said. “We don’t have to be in traditional female roles. I think that’s probably one of my biggest impacts that I’m happy to bring to Effingham County.” **EDN**

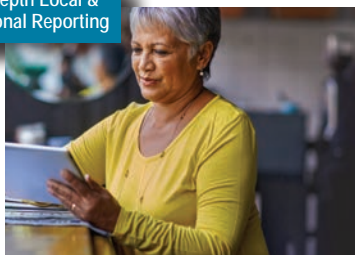
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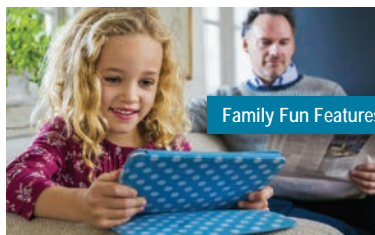
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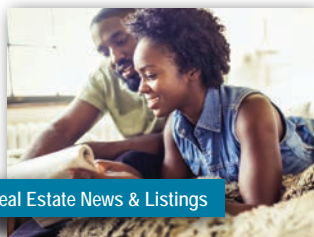
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Joe Sippers Café

Joe Sippers Café has been in the Effingham area since 2005. However, in 2018, it started a new chapter. Emily Debenham became the new owner. Emily brings over 10 years of food and beverage experience, as well as a Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management to the business. She is assisted by her husband, Brennan, who also has over 10 years of experience in the hospitality industry, and a degree from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts. When Brennan is not helping with the café or their two kids, he works as a Registered Nurse with HSHS in the Home Health Division.

She and Brennan met at firefly grill, and that is where their passion for food and beverage ignited. From there, they moved on to work in restaurants in Anchorage, AK and Las Vegas, NV. At the peak of their careers in Las Vegas, Emily was working for the ever-popular Celebrity Chef, Gordon Ramsay as a Restaurant Manager, and Brennan was the Chef of Lola's Cajun Kitchen. Together they share a passion for all things Hospitality and Culinary Arts. They bring loads of fresh ideas and savvy business intel that is sure to move Joe Sippers in a

positive forward direction. "We want to position the café as more of a convenient option for lunch by offering online ordering and delivery. Also, we know that the café is well-known for its coffee and beverages, but we want to bring more of a foodie element to the café by introducing some new menu items with unique ingredients and flavor profiles."

Owning a Café is a dream come true for Emily. The story of the acquisition begins four years ago when she and her family moved back to Green Creek. Her desire to be an entrepreneur and leverage all the experience she had gained drove her to begin crafting a business plan to make her dream a reality. As she worked on the business plan, she reached out to local businesses to gather more information. That is when she and the previous owner of Joe Sippers began meeting and sharing ideas. After sharing her plan with Kevin Hiatt, the previous owner, he knew that she would be a great fit to take the business to the next level. And the rest is history. In late 2018, Emily became the new owner of Joe Sippers Café.

Joe Sippers Café understands and values its local relationships within the commu-



nity. It values the efforts of local farmers, gardeners and craftspeople and work with them whenever possible whether it is to obtain ingredients or feature crafts within the café.

At Joe Sippers Café, customers can enjoy a hand-brewed coffee or tea while enjoying handcrafted baked goods and sandwiches that were created with only the highest quality ingredients such as local honey, local free-range eggs, all natural deli meats and lofty portions of nutritious produce.

Joe Sippers Café has many ideas in store for 2019 - new menu items, new pastries, new drinks, and they expect to launch online ordering and delivery this summer. So, make sure you stop by and check them out. You can follow them on Facebook and Instagram at Joe Sippers Café or visit the website at joesippers.com to order some coffee or just check in on what's new.

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Stevens Industries, Inc.

Expansion is in the works at Stevens Industries Inc.'s Teutopolis headquarters. Continuing the growth that began in 2018, this year the manufacturer of architectural millwork and casework will expand in Teutopolis and Effingham. The result will include more than 750,000 square feet of manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and railway transportation space.

Growth has been attributed to the continued demand for the company's designs in custom millwork, cabinetry and decorative laminate panels used for furniture and wall systems. Market expansion in healthcare facilities, multi-family housing and education sectors

has necessitated the changes.

"Our focus on product design has been a driving force behind our success in new markets," explains Todd Wegman, company president. "We monitor trends and research new technology so we can offer our customers the best in design, environmental conscientiousness and advanced surface technology. Investing in our facility, technology and our team equips us to maintain our competitive edge and positions us for a rewarding future."

"Stevens is committed to the pursuit of excellence in customer care, product innovation, community investment and respect for the environment," he con-

cluded. "We strive to be an employer of choice in our community and are proud of the way our team is succeeding."

Stevens is the largest manufacturer of commercial cabinetry in North America, and a leading producer of decorative laminate panels. The 100-percent employee-owned company anticipates sustained growth in sales and workforce.

More information about Stevens Industries can be found at www.stevensind.com.



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Focus on Technology and Citizen Engagement

City of Effingham

Technology and engaging with the citizens of Effingham continue to be a high priority for the City of Effingham. During 2018, the City purchased new software totaling more than \$200,000. One software system has five different programs ranging from payroll and general ledger to tracing inventory and purchasing, as well as utility billing. It will even track capital assets. This new software allows citizens to track the City's finances online, as well as receive notifications. These notifications used to be done manually. Now, with the software, a water leak could be detected automatically and notification automatically sent to the customer. The other software put into place this year was a timekeeping system for City employees. It will track overtime and cut down on human error. It will also allow the City to track what was done and how much

was spent on certain projects.

The City has made strides on engaging with citizens this year through making sure that there are live streams of city council meetings as well as posting on facebook and twitter on an ongoing basis. The Effingham City Circuit newsletter also shares council meeting summaries, event highlights and community news. There is also an industrial newsletter that focuses on industrial projects, workforce statistics, business expansions and other positive aspects of doing business in Effingham.

Another bright spot in the City is the new police station. It has over 26,000 square feet and includes a more inviting lobby at the main entrance for the public, as well as space for training, processing, storage of evidence and much more according to Police Chief Jeff Fuesting. The new building has 27 full time police

officers, two part time officers, four professional staff, 10 full time telecommunicators and 5 part time telecommunicators. It was built for current technology as well as future technology.

2018 also saw development of a fourth business district in Effingham. The South Banker Street Business District stretches along U.S. Route 45 and South Banker Street between the CSX Railroad to the north and Hoffman Drive to the south. This business district impacts about 60 businesses.

Looking ahead in 2019, the City of Effingham will have council elections as well as working on plans to bring new commercial businesses to Effingham. Visit the website www.effinghamil.com, download the Effingham Connection app and learn about the many ways that the City staff are making Effingham a great place to live and work.



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Jeff Fuesting, Police Chief
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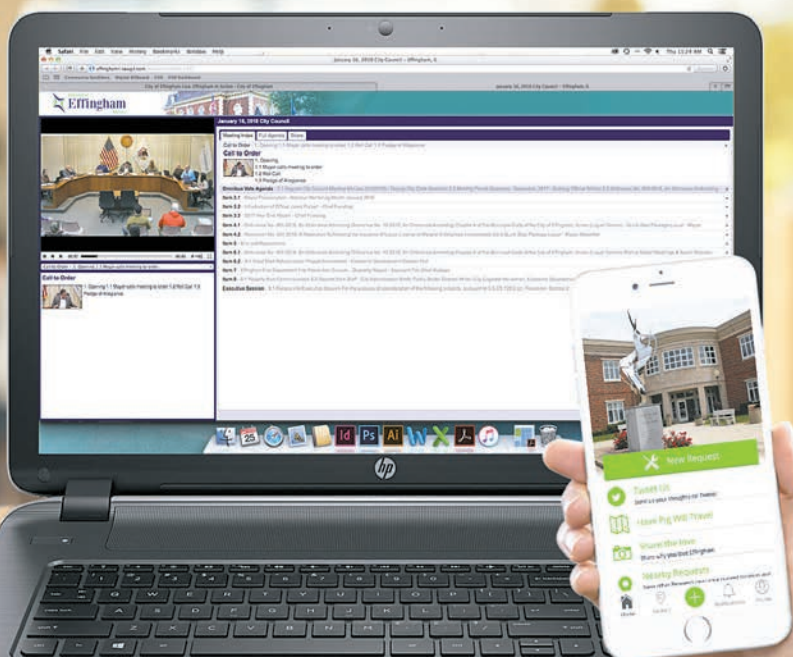
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NORMA LANSING

has helped shape Effingham County growth

By Charles Mills



Photos by Charles Mills

Effingham County Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Norma Lansing active in the Effingham County community.

When Norma Lansing graduated from Newton High School in the early 1970s, she had no idea she would one day become president and CEO of one of the most influential community organizations in Effingham County.

After high school, Lansing landed a job as a reporter at the Effingham Daily News. She added the title Special Page Editor during her employment between 1971 and 1978.

"A friend of mine was working at the newspaper and told me I should check into it," Lansing said.

One of the things she covered was Effingham City Hall, which was located where Dust and Sons is now on South Banker Street.

"The chamber office was on the second

floor," Lansing said. "So, I got acquainted with the person who was at the chamber, and started actually volunteering."

During her employment at the EDN, Lansing started working as a paid part-time receptionist at the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce between 1976 and 1984. Lansing found she had some extra time after working at the newspaper as she waited for her husband, Ken, to finish his job as manager of Martin's IGA.

"I worked at the paper from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and had from 3 to 5 p.m. my own time until my husband got off at 5," Lansing said. "I just filled my time there typing and running the mimeograph machine back in those days."

She worked as an administrative assistant for four years before becoming the president and CEO of the Effingham

County Chamber of Commerce in 1988.

"I love helping people," Lansing said. "And seeing the community prosper and grow."

"I like to help make those things happen by connecting people with the resources they need to be successful," she added.

In addition to her responsibilities at the chamber, Lansing keeps busy with several local organizations in the community.

She has been a member of the Effingham Regional Career Academy Board since 2015, and now serves as vice president of the board of directors. The academy is creating a technical education curriculum for younger students and adults.

Lake Land College plans to begin construction of the 36,000-square-foot Rural Development and Technology Center next to the Effingham Kluthe Center for Higher

A collection of awards and recognitions Norma Lansing received over the years is shown.

“I love helping people. And seeing the community prosper and grow.”

Norma Lansing
Effingham County Chamber of Commerce
President & CEO



Education and Technology in 2022.

“Right now we are building the curriculum and getting the facility up and running,” Lansing said.

Lansing has also been a member of the Effingham Regional Growth Alliance Board of Directors, an economic development organization, since 2013, and she is the secretary of the Effingham Regional Incubator Network Board of Directors. Lansing says the incubator network is a collaboration of incubator sites developed in Effingham, Teutopolis, Dieterich and Newton.

“We have people who have a business idea and need a space to work to establish the business,” Lansing said. “A lot of people don’t want to do that from their homes.”

“Right now, we are taking a look at how we can provide more collaborative opportunities for them,” Lansing said. “A place where they can work together and bounce ideas off of each other.”

Lansing is on the steering committee for Impact 2030. She’s a member of the Noon Rotary Club in Effingham, serving as president from 2011-2012. She was also named a Rotary Club Paul Harris Fellow.

Lansing is a past member of the Effingham County Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) program advisory board from 2007-2015; a past member of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs (GFWC) Effingham Women of Today; past

member and district chairman of the Illinois Federation of Women’s Clubs board of directors; co-chairman of the Effingham Sesquicentennial Committee from 2002-2003; a former board member of the Effingham County Community Development Corporation; and past board member of the Eastern Illinois University Industrial Technology Advisory Board.

Over the years, Lansing has sharpened her public service expertise as a graduate of the basic economic development course offered by Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville and graduate of the Dale Carnegie course in human relations and public speaking.

Lansing is a member of the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, for which she served as board president in 1998, Member of the American Chamber of Commerce Executives and a member of the Illinois Retail Merchants

Association.

Awards received by Lansing include a 2016 Individual Leadership Award from the Illinois Workforce Partnership, 2015 recipient of the Vocational Excellence Award from the Noon Rotary Club, 2014 Outstanding Leadership in Community and Economic Development award from the East Central Illinois Development Corporation and recipient of the 1999 Distinguished Illinois Chamber of Commerce Executive award.

Lansing received a certification in 1997 from the Illinois Accredited Chamber Executive program, was a 1995 participant in the Institute of Advanced Management, a professional development program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and 1994 graduate from the University of Notre Dame Institute for Organizational Management. [EDN](#)

Jane Summers of Siemer Milling received the 2018 Employee of the Year award during the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce First Friday Employee Appreciation Luncheon held at the Thelma Keller Convention Center.

From left are Effingham County Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Norma Lansing, Summers and Effingham Mayor Jeff Bloemker.



Heart & Home Realty

Heart and Home Realty, which began on July 1, 2011, is a full-service real estate company that specializes in residential, commercial, farm and lake properties. Currently, there are two locations for Heart and Home Realty.

Heart and Home Realty began in the home of Mandee and Matt Hirtzel. Matt was the part-time business manager, while Mandee was the full-time real estate agent. For four years they worked out of their home. In 2015, they felt that it was time to expand so Matt and Mandee opened an office in Vandalia. After three short years there, they felt that the time was right to expand once again. In January 2018, another Heart and Home Realty office opened in Effingham.

Heart and Home Realty is a family-owned business and prides itself on treating all of its customers like they are

family. They enjoy focusing on helping people step by step through the buying and selling processes, which can be challenging and complicated.

Whether you are looking to buy or sell, their agents have the expertise to walk you through the entire process.

Available in the Effingham office to assist you with all your home buying and selling needs are: Brian Henning, Managing Broker; Mandee Hirtzel, Owner-Broker; Kelly Butts, Broker; Molly Bushue, Broker; Luke Bockhorn, Broker; and Jennifer Silva, Office Manager.

Available in the Vandalia Office to assist you are: Pat Buscher, Broker; Nancy Gebke, Broker; Mandee Hirtzel, Managing Broker/ Owner; Candy Marshel, Broker; Amy Meyer, Broker; Sandy Michel, Broker; Danny Reiss, Broker; Tyler Schmitt, Broker; and Jen Philpot,

Office Manager.

Their two locations cover a large area with a focus on Fayette and Effingham counties. The Fayette County office serves the area that includes the communities of Vandalia, Greenville, Ramsey, Brownstown, St. Elmo, Patoka, Farina and more. The Effingham County office serves the area that includes the communities of Effingham, Neoga, Teutopolis, Dieterich, Altamont, Beecher City, Watson, Mason, Edgewood and more.

Make sure to follow them on Facebook at Heart and Home Realty-Effingham and Heart and Home Realty-Vandalia, or find them online at HeartandHomeIllinois.com.



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A close-up photograph of a human eye. The iris is a vibrant rainbow color, with segments of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. The pupil is dark and centered. The eyelashes are long and dark, and the surrounding skin is light and textured.

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WOMEN

in ministry

Women take on
role of spiritual
leader

By Dawn Schabbing

The Rev. Christine Cunningham, directing pastor at Centenary United Methodist in Effingham, felt called into the ministry as a young girl.

As an adult, after trying to work in other areas of spiritual care, she eventually realized she “could not outrun the calling” of being ordained a minister.

“I’ve always seen it that either you have gifts for ministry or you don’t, but that isn’t necessarily defined by your gender,” said Cunningham. “However, there has to be a certain amount of flexibility, a certain amount of capacity for empathy, and for deep listening.”

The United Methodist Church

According to the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, which encompasses roughly the southern two-thirds of Illinois, the United Methodist Church supports the full inclusion of women in every aspect of church.

“Women have been in ministry for a long time in the Methodist tradition for more than a century,” said Paul Black, director of Communication Ministries in Springfield. “Women preached as exhorters and led worship in homes and Bible studies.”

In 1956, the Methodist Church gave women the full rights of ordination and the sacramental privileges associated with it.

Cunningham noted the church congregation has to be willing to accept the different gifts that different ministers bring. Each minister will have their own spiritual gifts to offer the congregation, she said.

Qualities such as selflessness, compassion, empathy and the ability to juggle many different things at once are just a few things women in ministry offer, whether that is in a hospital setting, the community, or in a church.

The calling

“I’ve known I was called into ministry since I was 13,” said Cunningham, a divorced mother of two grown daughters, and a new grandmother. “But at that time, there were not many ordained women in



Photo by Dawn Schabbing
Carol Gapsis, manager of Spiritual Care Services at HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital, is seated at her desk.

ministry.”

After dabbling in other careers, Cunningham entered the seminary at age 40. She has had four assignments within the United Methodist Church since then. She has been a pastor for 15 years.

She joined the Rev. Jessica Baldyga, associate pastor, at Centenary United Methodist Church, who is now on her second assignment.

Like Pastor Christine, Pastor Jessica knew as a teenager that ministry was her calling.

Baldyga, now 33, has been a pastor for nearly nine years – in Effingham for more than three.

Having a solid faith background is important, the women said.

“My grandfather was a pastor and his grandfather was a pastor, so my family jokes that it skips a generation,” said Baldyga of her Methodist background. “All throughout my childhood, my grandfather knew I was going to be a pastor. I didn’t believe him until I was 17 and on a mission trip with my youth group and felt called to the ministry.”

The Centenary pastoral team are the third female team ever named – lead pastor and associate pastor – in the Great Rivers

Conference. They make up one of just two all-female pastoral staff now in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, Baldyga said. The other serves Springfield Douglas Avenue United Methodist Church.

At first, Baldyga considered working as a missionary in some way.

“My grandpa passed away about a month before I graduated college, and that was a powerful moment in my call to ministry, realizing all the people my grandpa had impacted in his life, and wanting to bring something to people like he did,” said Baldyga.

Cunningham has held several different positions.

“I came to ministry late,” said Cunningham. “I had lots of different kinds of jobs, outside of being a mom. I had a small business, where I ran a small perennial plant nursery. I’ve been a secretary. I worked at a plant nursery before I opened my own nursery.”

In the United Methodist Church, it is common for young people and adults to attend summer camps. The pastor said she’d gone to summer camp for many years, where she began to get the call to ministry.

“There was not very much encouragement,” Cunningham said. “At that point in

my life and even now probably, I was not an in-your-face-trailblazer kind. So I was a really good lay person, for a really long time.”

UMC ordination

Twenty years after earning a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Cunningham entered the seminary.

She attended Aquinas Institute, a Catholic Seminary in St. Louis, because at that time, she wasn’t sure that she needed ordination to fulfill her calling. At Aquinas, she earned a graduate-level certificate in spiritual direction.

But she realized that wasn’t enough to fulfill her calling. She went on and earned a master’s degree in theology with an emphasis in spiritual formation.

“I knew then I would have to get ordained, so I went to Eden Seminary, also in St. Louis, where I worked on my Master of Divinity,” Cunningham said. “But between these two, I also had some chaplaincy training and so I’ve worked as a chaplain and a local church pastor.”

Baldyga earned a bachelor’s degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in philosophy and religious study. She earned a Master of Divinity from Wesley Seminary in Washington, D.C.

Baldyga is now married to Eric Baldyga, and they have two daughters, ages 4 and 6.

Women at the pulpit

Baldyga said it wasn’t until she was in college that she was told women couldn’t be pastors.

“I never knew there was a time when women couldn’t be pastors,” said Baldyga. “There was a woman in my church who was called to be a pastor. My pastor’s wife was the district superintendent. So I never knew this to be an issue, until I was in college, at age 18 or 19, when someone told me women couldn’t be pastors.”

She took this to her nondenominational campus ministry, where she was told that women were not called to ministry.

“They were very adamant that God wasn’t really calling us, and we were wrong,” said Baldyga. “I was told that women couldn’t be pastors because only men could talk about God and that women needed men’s protection when speaking about God.”

“When I heard this info, I listened to the woman speak and walked out to never return to that group. I wanted to continue to follow my calling because of just that. I am called by God and I knew women could be pastors because I had two incredible examples in my home church,” she said.

When it comes to this line of work hav-

ing passion for the ministry is vital.

While it may be hard to find other women ministers, Baldyga advises others interested in ministry to surround themselves with other female pastors who are passionately called to ministry.

Chaplaincy

Carol Gapsis spent 36 years in nursing, but has transitioned into bereavement counseling and spiritual care at HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital.

She said more women are entering the ministry today.

“And I think that’s neat,” said Gapsis, 73.

She is also a volunteer chaplain for the Effingham Fire Department, where she helps families who might be displaced get services they need. She is also there for the firefighters and the chief following incidents, if she’s needed. She previously volunteered for the Effingham County Sheriff’s Department with the victims of domestic abuse. She also worked with agencies like SAFE and SWAN, which serve those victims.

“You have to have passion for this (spiritual care),” said Gapsis. “You have to work at it and be dedicated. You have to be the type of person where you are going to see Jesus in other people. You have to be open to minister to everyone because they wouldn’t be coming to you if they weren’t hurting.”

In her hospital setting, Gapsis said seeing critically ill children and babies is the toughest part about what she does.

According to the American Chaplains Association, chaplains work outside of the traditional walls of a church. They may be in the military, in hospitals or in communities where there is a crisis situation.

Chaplains provide more than just spiritual help and guidance, according to the ACA website. They meet the practical needs of people who are experiencing pain. Chaplains can offer ministry and help to those who do not regularly attend any church. Their duties might be something like a Good Samaritan, helping out wherever they are needed.

“I think that some men can be empathetic, but I also think you will find women generally are more compassionate,” said Gapsis. “Especially if they have had a similar experience, they really connect.”

Career transition

Gapsis worked as a surgical nurse before transitioning into bereavement counseling and spiritual care. She was named manager of those services at the hospital in 2005. She has no plans to retire anytime soon.

Gapsis, who is the wife of a retired

physician, John Gapsis, said women in ministry have to know that everyone else comes first. She is the mother to two adult daughters and four grandchildren.

“Like anyone in health care or spiritual ministry, it is the patients that come first. You have to be centered on the needs of those you are serving,” said Gapsis.

One of her first experiences as a spiritual care minister came when her mother was dying in a Chicago hospital. When she arrived, she learned no priest had been called to her bedside.

“She was never anointed,” said Gapsis. “When I arrived, we called the priest and once she got (her Last Rites) then she passed. She was waiting for that, as a Catholic that was important to her.”

But Gapsis said it really wasn’t in her plan to transition into spiritual care. God led her down that path.

Gapsis recalled when she had often stepped up and helped families with loved ones who were dying, she prayed with people who were alone and afraid, and soon, she moved from full-time nurse to certified bereavement counselor.

“I miss nursing and I still keep my license up to date. But, this is so rewarding,” said Gapsis.

Spiritual gifts

Back at Centenary United Methodist Church, both pastors said each person brings something unique to the ministry.

“Each one of us is different and we all bring unique gifts to ministry whether we are men or women,” said Baldyga. “I think being a mom brings different and interesting aspects into ministry. It allows us to have a different understanding. And it allows us to empathize in a different way. When I first started in ministry, I didn’t have little kids, and I can see how it has changed my ministry.”

The women call it an honor to be a part of special or highly emotional times in people’s lives.

“We get to be there when a baby is born, when a baptism is done, or when a person is dying. Other than the closest family members, we are the only ones who get to be there,” said Baldyga.

“And it isn’t easiest to be there, but you get to help people in very special places. But it is such an honor and you get to witness some really beautiful things,” the associate pastor said.

Cunningham described ministry this way:

“It is a real honor. You never feel worthy to be there, but you are.” **EDN**

Effingham Convention & Visitors Bureau

Effingham Convention and Visitors Bureau started its “Made in Effingham” program in 2018 and that program has really taken off in its first year.

This program is a way to highlight local makers each month. Those makers may be an individual or business that helps shape Effingham with its unique craft. The list of makers includes: Firefly Grill, Hodgson Mill, Fresh Digs, John Boos Factory Showroom & Outlet, Emma Lagerhausen, Alwerdt Gardens/ Alwerdt Artworks & Sculpture Park, Effing Brew Company, Tytia Habing Photography and Tuscan Hills Winery. Whether these makers paint, sculpt, brew, cook with locally sourced foods or anything in between, the Convention and Visitors Bureau is proud to support those who help make Effingham the vibrant and extraordinary community that it is!

Another highlight this year for the Effingham CVB continues to be the Wonderland in Lights. It proved to be another record-breaking year for the event, according to Jodi Thoele, tourism director. They saw 7,728 cars and made more than \$18,348.21 in donations. This drive-through light display continued to draw visitors from all over the area.

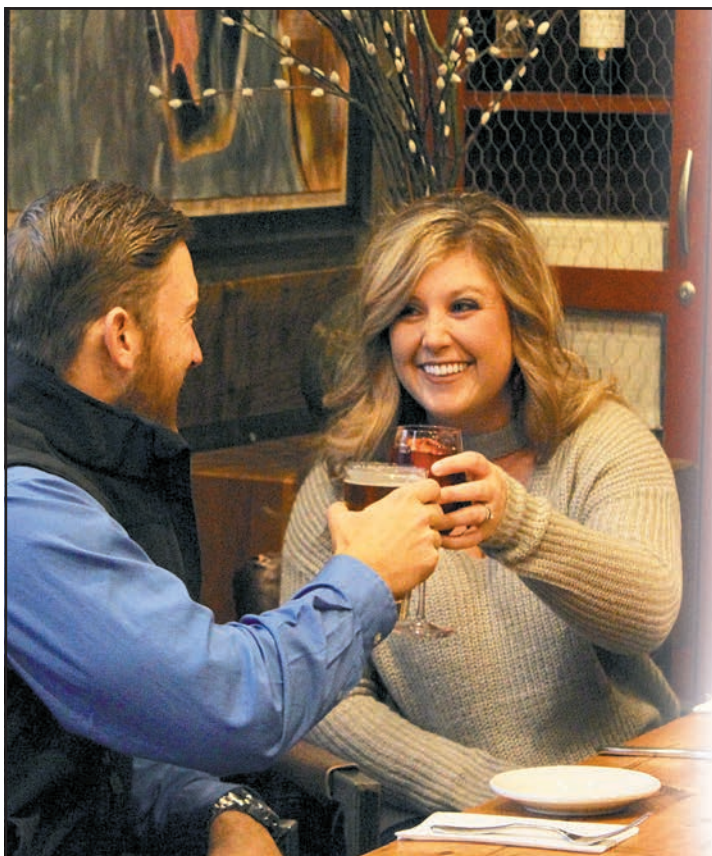
The Effingham CVB loves to be a part of family traditions as people continue to visit the lights several times each year. In addition to the Wonderland in Lights, they also added more 3D floor standing displays to the downtown courthouse lawn, including the popular reindeer and sleigh.

Looking ahead for the community, the Effingham CVB is excited to start promoting Effingham as a wedding destination spot. They are working with a group

to start a new wedding association called “Weddings in Effingham: a Destination (WED).” Plans also include launching a new website — effinghamweddings.com — soon for the wedding association. This will give brides and grooms a place to check out the venue and vendor list of people and places in Effingham that can be part of their wedding plans.

The hope is to continue to garner interest from venues and vendors who work in the Effingham area. The Effingham CVB would like to be a great resource for people looking for the perfect spot to get married in this region.

Promoting the attractions and features of Effingham to locals and visitors alike, the CVB shows that Effingham really is a great place to Eat, Stay and Play.



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AREA WOMEN paving the way for military leadership

By Kaitlin Cordes



Photo Submitted

Effingham native Kristi Nosbisch stands in front of an Army-grade helicopter during her deployment to Afghanistan.

Nearly 17 percent of those serving in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps combined are female, according to the latest figures by the United States Department of Defense.

The number has been on the rise since 2013, when USDOD statistics showed 14.93 percent of military members were female. While the trend of women in the military continues to grow, some area female veterans and active duty military members agree that women still face adversity in the male-dominant field.

Rachel Bierman, 23, of Dieterich, is an active duty Army Second Lieutenant Military Intelligence Officer. Since she enlisted five years ago, Bierman has seen female representation in the Army grow by “leaps and bounds.”

“Women are now allowed in all positions in the Army. Women are allowed in combat positions as well as ranger school, and they are allowed to be infantry officers,” Bierman said.

“I know females in combat is a huge topic about if they are strong enough or if females and males co-exist down range. I have my own opinions, but it doesn’t matter what people think because they are allowed, and there are no restrictions.”

Bierman said the Army has made strides with its combat fitness test. She said now, there are no separate “male” and “female” standards. She said the new singular standard makes for a more level playing field.

Despite the growth Bierman described, she has faced some adversity in her time in the Army. Bierman said while she attended Advanced Camp, a 31-day training event for Army Cadets, males and females lived on separate floors and were not allowed on the floors of the opposite sex.

Bierman said this segregation led to many communication issues for her and her fellow female cadets.

“Males would be conducting training or



Photo Submitted

Rachel Bierman, second to right, poses with fellow Army service members. Bierman has been in the Army for five years.

Photo Submitted
Loring Barr is pictured during her time at Air Force basic training after she enlisted in 1991.



preparing for missions without us. Essentially, half our platoon would do rehearsals to prepare for the mission, and they were missing all the females,” Bierman recalled. “We did not have cell phones, so many times, important information would be put out and the females would not get the information – so we would miss food or formation. It created a bad environment for females during training.”

Bierman said perhaps the worst obstacle she’s faced is not being taken seriously by male counterparts, despite rank or experience. As a female officer in a combat engineer unit, she’s had people speak over her, disregard her or plain pretend she does not exist.

To combat such adversity, Bierman said she had to learn to adapt to the military environment and make herself known in her platoon and beyond.

Effingham native Kristi Nobsch also faced communication issues in her time deployed in Afghanistan as a member of the Army’s Military Police. Nobsch, 30, said that because males and females were segregated to separate tents, communication would fail to reach the females.

“Communication from chain of command would often fail to be received by the females due to the distance. This was mainly when changes were made in the middle of the night,” Nobsch said. “I also feel the separation of females living in different tents as males inhibited females to bond with and form trust and loyalty with the males during their free time.”

Nobsch enlisted in 2009, during a time when females could not have jobs in the infantry or combat operations. She would like to see even more females in these roles in the future because she wanted an infantry job but was not allowed.

With the new equality emerging in the military, Nobsch hopes to see more females in leadership roles in the military.

“I foresee the growth and amount of females in the military to be equal to males in years to come,” Nobsch said. “I see more females stepping up to huge leadership roles. When I was deployed ... I feel females had to prove they were able to lead before being accepted as a leader. However, like any leadership position, once ground lines and respect are established, leading as a female was easily accepted.”

As for growth in specific areas of the military, Nobsch would like to see more females in combat operations, Selective

Service and the Navy Seals.

Lindsey Figgins, 32, of Toledo, would also like to see more females in infantry roles.

“I feel like it’s a really neat opportunity,” Figgins said. “It’s something I would have liked to have done.”

Figgins served in the Army for nearly six years and served as a Human Resources Sergeant, running an office at the company level. There she was in charge of up to 150 soldiers at a time and aided them with files, personnel records and other documentation.

While she was deployed to Afghanistan, it was uncommon to see women in high-ranking roles.

“In my unit, we had quite a few females, but they weren’t really past E-7 Sergeant First Class. Most of them were males any further up. There were some, but I’ve seen a lot more (female leaders) recently,” Figgins said.

Figgins will tell you that there are issues military women face even beyond active duty. She said she hopes to see more

people recognize women veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Figgins suffers from PTSD herself, and she hopes to see more women come forward for help.

“There are more women coming out that I’ve seen, but it seems like there’s this stigma that PTSD is only mostly men because they have the infantry roles and are on the frontlines,” Figgins said. “I do suffer from PTSD, so it’s a big thing with me. I try to make awareness of it with people who don’t understand that females can have it, too.”

Figgins admitted that since ending her

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Photo Submitted

Rachel Bierman is pictured in her Army ROTC uniform in front of the United States, United States Army and the Army ROTC flags.

stint in the military seven years ago, she has struggled with finding her purpose because her goal was to stay in the Army her entire career. Now, Figgins said she is going back to school to become a social worker and eventually, a counselor. She wants to open an equine therapy program for veterans with PTSD.

Altamont native Loring Barr, 45, and her daughter, Bria Barr, 19, both believe women like Figgins, Nosbisch and Bierman need to be celebrated for choosing a somewhat unconventional path for their careers.

“I think women in the military, from my perspective, need to be celebrated in that we have kind of chosen a different path than what the majority pick,” Loring Barr said.

Bria Barr said while women’s roles in the military need recognition, everyone who chooses to join the armed forces need to be celebrated, too.

“I think everybody needs to be celebrated. It’s just kind of taboo still for women to pick such a strong profession to try to go into. But I think that even though they do that, we shouldn’t be surprised women are doing that anymore,” Bria Barr said. “It should be a standard that women are allowed to do things like that.”

Loring Barr is an Air Force veteran, and Bria Barr is currently enrolled in the Marine Corps’ Platoon Leaders Class Program, which is open to college students between their freshmen and junior years. The goal is for participants to eventually be commissioned as Marine Corps Officers while still going to school.

Loring Barr said she decided to join the Air Force her junior year of high school, in 1991, because her father was an Army 101st Airborne veteran. Bria Barr said she

“I think women in the military, from my perspective, need to be celebrated in that we have kind of chosen a different path than what the majority pick.”

Loring Barr
Air Force Veteran

began her military path because it was her turn to serve.

Loring Barr was stationed at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, where she served in a civil engineering squadron. There she started as an electrician’s apprentice.

“There were around 250 men and five women as far as (being) enlisted,” Loring Barr said of her squadron. “When I showed up, I was the only woman that didn’t work in an office, so I was the only woman doing the same job as the guys.”

When Loring Barr started out in the Air Force, she worked in the electrical department with low-voltage wiring. Eventually, she worked her way up to high-voltage jobs, learned how to climb utility poles and operate bucket trucks.

Loring Barr moved to the readiness department a year and a half into her enlistment. There, she was in charge of making sure her squadron was deployable and ready to handle natural disasters or plane crashes.

Bria Barr currently spends her summers training in six-week Officer Candidate

School programs. She had also experienced a low number of women at the Military Entrance Processing Station where she was medically cleared to be in the military.

“There were 150 people there that day. There were six women, and I was one of them and I was the only officer candidate there,” Bria Barr recalled.

Loring Barr said that when she enlisted, she experienced some people thinking she didn’t belong in the electrical department because she was a female. She even described going into the Air Force as somewhat of a “culture shock.”

For Bria Barr, the experience is different. She said she has experienced nothing but positivity throughout the PLC program. She said her biggest challenge so far is keeping in the best physical shape.

“You have to be so unbelievably physically fit, so sometimes it’s difficult for me to keep up with the guys,” Bria Barr said. “Everybody is so kind in this program, and they are so supportive of everybody else. You can really see through these people that the saying ‘There’s no women in the Marine Corps. You’re just a Marine.’” **EDN**



Photo Submitted

Kristi Nosbisch, left, and fellow Army members prepare to take off for a mission while in full gear during Nosbisch’s service in Afghanistan.

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MULTIMEDIA CLASS

at EHS spurs creativity

By Crystal Reed



Photos by Crystal Reed

Shelby Herboth works on applying plaster on top of clay as part of the process of creating a mask.



Bethany Baez adjusts the wings she created in Multimedia class. This was her first project for the class.



Freddy Lopez Jr. works on a prototype for his ancient Mayan headdress during Multimedia class.

Effingham High School offers a multimedia course that allows students to explore their creativity in a variety of ways. The class is taught by Joe Fatheree and Charlie Huber.

“We’re living in a world where we are losing jobs to automation,” Fatheree said. “We are helping students develop the creative aspect of the human brain and make sure they are marketable for years to come.”

Fatheree has been teaching the class since 1998 at the school. However, the course changed focus last year going from being a mainly filmmaking course to more of an engineering program.

“We work with our students to co-design 100 lessons a day,” Fatheree said. “Every day is a new story in here.”

One of the students in the class is Shelby Herboth, a junior. Her project for the class is creating a latex mask. As part of the process, she had plaster on her face for multiple hours. She then added molding clay to the plaster that had molded to her face and was adding more plaster over that.

Herboth said that as part of her project she was learning chemistry and 3-D modeling. Some day she’d like to be an art teacher or cosmetologist.

Herboth likes the freedom of the class.

“I love that we can do what we desire,” she said. “My classmates push me to do what I want to do.”

Isabella Munoz, a senior, is working on a filmmaking project. Her short film, called “Status Faux” is about the top 10 stereotypes in high school.

As part of the project, she created a survey for the senior class to vote who they thought fits specific stereotypes. She’ll interview those who were selected as meeting the stereotypes. Munoz expects her film to be about 15 minutes long.

One of the things that she likes about the class is learning to work with a variety of people. She also likes the challenges of the class.

“There are daily challenges and you have to learn to balance and days where

you kick it into high gear,” Munoz said.

Freddy Lopez Jr., a junior, is using his family background for his project about an ancient Mayan headdress, which he was inspired to create because his father is part Mayan and part Inca.

He is making a prototype out of feathers and other craft items. The actual full-size project will include a headdress, crown, piercings out of clay and a staff.

Zander Eirhart, a senior, has a project focusing on the controversy over violent video games. Through his video essay, he hopes to prove wrong the idea that violent video games cause violence. Part of his research includes looking at psychological studies. His favorite thing about the class is the freedom.

“You get to choose what you would like to do,” he said. “There are more ways to express creativity and get a grade for it.”

Abigail Baez, also a senior, is working on a project about what a day in the summer looks like for her.

Another project she is working on has to do with raising awareness about the declining bee population. She has created 100 baggies that she is going to pass out in warmer weather that include a bee aware bracelet, a seed bomb and a piece of paper explaining what the seed bomb is.

She is starting her fourth semester in the class. Her career goals include computer engineering or science.

“I enjoy that in the class you have the option to do what you want to do and manage your time and resources properly,” she said.

Bethany Baez, a senior, has one of her projects displayed visibly in Fatheree’s classroom: A pair of life-size wings. She built the prototype last summer and was able to wear the wings at school one day.

Another project that she is working on is making tattoos and stickers.

“I’m learning how to color and format things so that I can potentially make my own stickers,” she said.

Baez said that being in the multimedia class has helped her understand her career path, which is creating and designing. **EDN**

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SDS is celebrating 35 years of providing technology services. In 1984 when computers took up entire rooms, Steven Schallert saw a need for high-quality custom programming services in the Effingham area. He worked with several companies developing software applications. Over time, the company grew and became a reseller for large IBM systems of the day and the business focus expanded to include all IT services.

The business has continued to grow along with acquiring several area computer companies. This focused growth helped SDS to expand and offer the best technology services in the area. In 2003 they moved into their current 5,300 Square foot facility on South Banker which is currently being renovated with additional meeting space to accommodate their customer's technology and training needs.

Technology surrounds us and the impact on our lives continues to grow daily. When you think of the strides in technological development over the last

35 years it is pretty amazing. SDS is continually expanding services into areas of technology to increase the support for the needs of their customers. The lines between types of technology continue to blur more as they cross connect. VOIP Phone systems is a great example. SDS is the area partner for 8x8 Communications a top internet-based phone/communication system. SDS helps their customers save time and money with a modern solution.

SDS is well known in the Effingham and surrounding area for their expertise, prompt service and innovation. They believe in aggressively investing in the technology needs of their customers. They maintain partner relationships with leading vendors such as IBM, Microsoft, SonicWall, 8x8, HP, Dell and others. These partnerships assist SDS in maintaining advanced certification levels which keep their staff on the cutting edge of the ever-changing technology curve.

SDS is the leading provider in computer and networking sales, security

and services in the market. The industry continues to change at a rapid pace and when their technicians aren't working with clients, they're studying the latest trends and technologies geared to today's and tomorrow's real-world business needs. They all agree network security is a sector to stay aware and monitor. The rise in virus, adware, scareware, and ransomware continues to be an area of constant worry. Another area to watch will be artificial intelligence. A.I. is going to be big in future technology for both the home and business consumers. As the world becomes more automated and appliances and devices tap into the internet, users are going to see an increased need for tech services.

2019 is going to be a great year for SDS. With plans to expand their market area they are currently recruiting additional staff for their VOIP services, IT security, and managed services teams. SDS will continue investing in new technology to grow and adapt to the needs of their customers.

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Dan Hecht Chevrolet-Toyota rings in 2019 with additional growth

Dan Hecht



Early in 2018, Dan Hecht Chevrolet-Toyota celebrated their 60th year in business with the dealership's fourth expansion by moving into a brand new ultra-modern showroom and office area with 8,000 additional square feet of space. On January 1 of this year, the dealership experienced additional growth with the acquisition of Arthur Young Chevrolet in Vandalia.

Arthur Young Chevrolet, located at 122 W. Gallatin Street, offers new and used vehicle sales, service and parts. "The acquisition of Arthur Young Chevrolet was a good fit for us as we both have a very similar business model and both of our businesses are family oriented", said Jim Hecht, general manager of Dan Hecht Chevrolet-Toyota. To enhance customer service at the Vandalia

location, Dan Hecht has added rental cars at the Vandalia dealership and hired a business and finance manager for that location to assist customers with payment options when they are in the market for a new or used vehicle. All employees at the Vandalia dealership were retained to further ensure a smooth transition.

Dan Hecht Chevrolet-Toyota and its 70+ employees have built their business and reputation on a commitment to customer service. Their motto "Our Service Makes The Difference" has been the cornerstone of their success with their customers. They employ highly trained mechanics who repair the problem right the first time, thus keeping expenses down for the dealership and their customers.

In addition to offering auto sales,

service, parts, rental vehicles, and a finance department that assists prospective buyers regardless of their credit history, the brand new ultra-modern environmentally friendly building in Effingham has allowed Dan Hecht Chevrolet-Toyota to add a complete detail service department and expand their body shop so their customers can now enjoy a full service center all at the same location.

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THERESA RUTHERFORD

leads key Effingham County institution

President and
CEO of HSHS
St. Anthony's
Memorial
Hospital

By Dawn Schabbing

As the first secular woman to lead HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital in Effingham, Theresa Rutherford believes in encouraging the best people to enter the health care field.

"We need to encourage all people – male and female with great minds, that can build strong interpersonal relationships – to enter health care, as frontline colleagues and leaders," said Rutherford, the hospital's president and CEO for more than five years.

Rutherford leads Effingham County's largest employer which has more than 850 employees and generates \$138 million in net revenue.

Rutherford has been a registered nurse for 40 years, a profession dominated by women early in her career. As she advanced, Rutherford said, options for women became fewer.

"Unfortunately, the more advanced your aspirations become, the fewer the seats, and the more competitive it becomes for men and for women, no matter what field you are in," she said. "I think we should hire the best candidate for the work that needs done – male or female."

The first leaders of the hospital were religious women from the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, followed by several men who filled the role before she was appointed to the helm. The hospital has been part of the Effingham community for more than 140 years.

"I'm so proud to follow these prior leaders, as they all are responsible for the history and expansion of our organization," said Rutherford. "I'm also proud to be part of an amazing group of colleagues whose hands, minds and hearts care for the communities that put their trust in us."

Rutherford has been credited with leading the hospital in advancing technology, enhancing quality, increasing colleague engagement, improving the patient experience and reflecting transparency with com-



Photo by Dawn Schabbing
Theresa Rutherford stands in her office at HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital. She is the first secular woman leader of the hospital in its 140-year history.

munity members.

Career obstacles

While her career path came with struggles, Rutherford said everyone faces obstacles – men and women. The way some in authority view individuals can cause barricades that may not have been deserved. Rutherford shakes her head at some of the things she's been told could hinder her from a successful career.

"I was told I would not advance in my

career because of various things – my weight; the fact I didn't play golf; because my husband was a firefighter and not a businessman; because I was a woman, a mother, a wife, and a nurse," said Rutherford.

She said after trying many different diets, losing and regaining the weight, she decided to have a gastric sleeve procedure three years ago.

"The process to prepare for surgery was long but very worthwhile," said Rutherford. "I've lost over 185 pounds and I'm three years post-procedure. I will need to manage my weight my whole life, but my health is great, which allows me to enjoy activities with my family and grandchildren."

It's been a learning experience she shares with others.

"I would say that the barriers I have overcome have taught me that your success is yours to build," said Rutherford. "Listening to others can be stifling. So you need to listen to others, but then determine what you are going to do about it – if anything."

As the first lay person who wasn't a man to be president and CEO of the hospital, Rutherford learned early in her leadership that the obstacles others said would hinder her journey "sound lame."

"By the way, I took golf lessons three times, and guess what? I'm still not good at golf. I find it fun at times, but I've accepted this will never be a standout reason why I'm a leader," said Rutherford.

Planning and sacrificing

While golf might not be her strong suit, Rutherford is proud of her skills in building leadership teams.

"To overcome barriers, I incorporated my experiences, education and nursing training along the way," said Rutherford. "I've also learned to build leadership teams that include people with talents and training different than my own. As an example, a mentor once told me that board members

might not understand my training as a nurse, but they understand the training and education required to receive an MBA.”

That is why she decided to pursue dual masters degrees – nursing and business.

The hospital’s CEO said being a lifelong learner helped guide her along the path to such leadership positions. She also credits her husband and family for ongoing support in her education and in opportunities which allowed for her to advance in her career.

“I know without a doubt that I would not be where I am today without having a family that has encouraged me and supported my journey,” said Rutherford.

She credits her husband, Thomas Rutherford Jr., who supported her throughout her professional and educational endeavors.

“I am so fortunate to be married to an amazing man – he has fully supported my ongoing education and has demonstrated the flexibility necessary for me to take jobs that allowed me to take the next step as a professional and leader. Every educational landmark I’ve accomplished has been since we’ve been married.”

Rutherford said the pair made sacrifices along the way.

“We’ve often lived across two communities so we both could meet the demands of our jobs and still raise and support our great family,” said Rutherford. “Communication and flexibility are a part of building great relationships. It was also important to us that we demonstrated resilience and a can-do attitude in our children. Our children thought every parent went to school, so I am so glad I have been able to be a great role model to them for lifelong learning.”

Rutherford said she has been blessed to have a good, positive alignment between her personal values and the organizations with which she has worked.

“I have held onto my attitude of being a lifelong learner, both through formal education and experiential instruction,” said Rutherford. “I have also strived to build interpersonal skills with an ability to interact and communicate well with everyone.”

She said, along with the desire to grow and advance professionally, this was only possible with much determination and “a solid plan of direction.”

“I have also been aided in my professional career by seeking and knowing great mentors – both women and men, who have given me advice and guidance along the way, and helped me grow as a person,” said Rutherford.

Background

Rutherford is a native of Coffeyville,

“I know without a doubt that I would not be where I am today without having a family that has encouraged me and supported my journey.”

Theresa Rutherford

President & CEO of HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital

Kansas. She completed her undergraduate degree in nursing at Millikin University in Decatur. In addition, she holds a Master of Science Nursing Administration and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is also a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives.

She has been credited for the launch of St. Anthony’s “I Promise” service philosophy, where the patient-centered goals of the team complement the patient-focused objectives of every individual colleague, physician and volunteer.

Under her leadership, St. Anthony’s began offering robotic orthopedic surgery – the only hospital in the area with this revolutionary technology. She has also led the hospital in receiving state and national accolades for offering advanced quality to patients – being named a 2015 Bronze Award winner for Commitment to Excellence from Illinois Performance Excellence, as well as receiving The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval for certification of the hospital’s Joint Replacement Program, according to the hospital’s website.

Through this program, the leader met with each and every colleague as they committed to their “Promise,” reflecting the openness she shares with the staff.

She’s been married to Thomas for almost 43 years. He is a retired firefighter. Her children are Dr. Thomas Rutherford III; Sarah Rutherford Smith and her husband, Sean; Paul Rutherford; Matthew Rutherford Sr. and his wife, Stephanie. She has seven grandchildren: Jocelynn, Matthew, Wyatt, Lincoln, Maddie, Gwen and Audra.

Advice for others

Rutherford explained being goal oriented is a part of her career successes.

“Have a plan,” said Rutherford. “You can’t get where you are going if you don’t know the destination.”

She said being lifelong learners only adds to the plan.

“Always continue to grow and learn,” she said.

She also said it’s important to listen to others, then decide what advice to act on.

Other tips: Be flexible. Have a mentor and know when the time is right to be

a mentor to someone else. Live a life of gratitude.

“Remember to thank those who help you along the way,” said Rutherford. “Recognize that there are many different paths to your accomplishments – sometimes you need to adapt and change your plan.”

And mostly, know and find your passion.

“Your passion will make the work more meaningful – it will still be hard, but always worth it.”

What others say

Dot Behrns, chairperson of the board of directors at HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital, appreciates the leadership Rutherford demonstrates.

“She always keeps the focus of the board on what is the best course of action for the people of the community, the hospital colleagues and the medical staff, while following the principles of our HSHS Franciscan organization, focused on our core values of respect, care, competence and joy,” Behrns said.

Behrns said Rutherford ensures credit is given to the managers and colleagues when the credit is due – a strong attribute in a good leader.

“Theresa always has a forward vision on how to improve access of care to the community so people do not have to travel, yet still get excellent health care close to home, especially for the older population,” Behrns said.

Dr. Ryan Jennings, chief medical officer at HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital, described Rutherford as a visionary and an innovative problem-solver.

“She truly seeks solutions – she comes to the table with her objectives, but incorporates everyone’s input and remains adaptable while still keeping the end goal in mind,” said Jennings.

“She is very transparent with our colleagues, medical staff and community members – her door is always open and she is very approachable. Theresa truly believes in the mission of our organization, ‘To reveal and embody Christ’s healing love for all people through our high quality Franciscan health care ministry,’ and leads by example in living this mission every day,” Jennings said. **EDN**

Effingham Public Library

Effingham Library offers an outlet for women of all ages

The Suzette Brumleve Memorial Effingham Public Library is a community hub where residents of all ages come to check out materials, participate in programs, engage with technology, enjoy a quiet place to study and visit with other patrons.

Women in the community enjoy many services offered by the library – whether it's business women holding meetings in study rooms, sorority groups gathering for social events, women participating in book discussions and memoir writing groups, or mothers enjoying one another's company at children's activities.

"The library truly is a hub in our community that brings women together and offers a variety of services for women," said Programming Outreach Manager Catherine Bailey. "Business women

often take advantage of our services, including our computers, Wi-Fi, printing, copying, faxing and scanning services."

Women operating in-home, day-care programs also find professional services at the library, such as the new Early Literacy Outreach program. Through the program, staff members visit area home daycares on a monthly basis to read stories and provide early literacy books and materials for the daycare to keep that month.

Library programs provide a place for women to come together for learning and social opportunities.

"Throughout the year, the library offers a number of programs for women on a variety of topics promoting education and self-growth," said Bailey. "Whether it is a book club, cooking class, national speaker or a discussion group about a global issue, programs offer a great place

for women to come together."

Women continue to use the library's technology services, which include everything from computers, to hotspots, to e-books, to movies and music to stream.

"Our library is now at your fingertips anytime, anywhere," said Bailey. "Whether you like to read, watch, or listen, we have a digital library for you."

The library's digital content providers all have easy to use apps that you can download on to your phone or tablet and take with you everywhere. Through apps, like CloudLibrary, Hoopla, and Libby, women can access a variety of digital material, including books, audio books, videos, music and more.

The library is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday; and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. To learn more, visit www.effinghamlibrary.org.

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The Clinic Effingham

The Clinic Effingham, located at 1011 Ford Ave., Effingham, opened in September 2016. Our continued focus is educating new patients and physicians. We also offer cannabis education seminars to our current patients who need additional advice on the different strains and ways of use.

The Clinic Effingham is providing relief to patients who have one of the 42 approved conditions by Illinois Department of Public Health. Everyday we are hearing patients' stories stating they were using multiple prescriptions, and are now using few to none.

For example, one of our patients, who was addicted to Hydrocodone for 10 years, has turned to medical cannabis 3

years ago. They have found that using the correct dosage and strain, cannabis offers the same pain relief and a natural alternative.

A cannabis dispensary is NOT a store who sells marijuana. The Clinic Effingham is LIKE a professional pharmacy. Our patients are family - not just to our staff - but amongst themselves.

A patient must have a Medical Marijuana card to gain access to retail. To obtain a card, the patient must have a physician certification (not prescription) stating the patient has been diagnosed with one of the 42 approved conditions. The patient must also submit proof of Illinois residency and a photo of themselves.



The Clinic Effingham offers new patient seminars on how to become a patient each month. We always welcome those who have questions regarding their condition or may need help with the application process. Application assistance is FREE of charge.



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MORE WOMEN choosing careers in agriculture

By Charles Mills

More women are choosing careers in agriculture, according to Lake Land College Agriculture Division Chair Ryan Orrick.

Orrick said a majority of the students in his Agricultural division are female.

"I'd say a 50-60 percent female population is not uncommon," Orrick said of the LLC agricultural program. "We've seen a little higher percentage of female students the past couple of years."

Orrick said in addition to being on the staff at Lake Land College the past eight years, he was a graduate of the agricultural program, attending Lake Land from 2001 to 2003.

"I only remember four female students in our animal science class of about 32," Orrick said. "It's definitely changed since the early 2000s."

He attributes the progression to a change in the family dynamics, with more two-income households. Meanwhile, the creation of jobs in the agricultural support industry has opened the door to more women.

"The demand is great for organizational skills," Orrick said.

According Orrick, most women enrolled in the ag program at Lake Land predomi-

nately work toward an associate degree in applied science. Some transfer to a four-year university to receive a bachelor's degree.

Mackenzie Hooten of rural Gays is a female agricultural student at Lake Land College who is pursuing an Ag Business degree.

Hooten graduated from Windsor High School and participated in the school's Future Farmers of America. She was treasurer of her 4-H program. As a member of the Windsor High School FFA, Hooten kept busy with livestock and dairy judging and various other activities.

"I showed cattle and pigs last year. That was my favorite," Hooten said.

Having no siblings, Hooten will be the fourth generation to take on family farm responsibilities, following her father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Hooten has always been involved in the family farm she grew up on, but within the past few years has become even more active.

"A couple of years ago is when I mainly got into it," Hooten said. "I learned how to run the tractor. ... We also have about 20 head of cattle. Most are show steers."

Hooten really wants to bring what she's learning in college back to the family farm.

Jenna Wojcik, a graduate of Cowden-Herrick High School, also participates in the LLC agricultural program.

Wojcik was involved with her local FFA chapter all four years of high school. But Jenna's interest in an ag-related career stems from her father, David Wojcik, who has been the ag instructor at Cowden-Herrick High School for almost 20 years.

Wojcik is an Ag Business and Supply major who plans to transfer her credits to Illinois State University, where she will double major in Ag Business and Pre-Law.

"It's going to be seven years before I get finished with all of my schooling," Wojcik said. "I'm hopefully going to get my JD degree in law and become an Ag lawyer."

Wojcik said an ag lawyer might deal

with environmental issues related to farming or the business end of the industry.

Harley Lumley came to Lake Land College from Lafayette, Indiana. She was a graduate of North Montgomery High School in Crawfordsville, Indiana.

Lumley was very active with 4-H growing up and in FFA during high school, serving as chapter president. She also competed in quiz bowl, judging livestock and livestock skill-athon. She holds both an FFA Indiana State degree and American FFA degree, which she received last year.

"I didn't play sports in high school, so everything I did revolved around agriculture," Lumley said. "Helping on the farm and being involved with FFA."

Lumley is the fourth generation in her family dedicated to the farming industry. However, she does not plan to return to the family farm after finishing her university studies.

"I am more into the livestock side of things," Lumley said. "I showed cattle for a year, showed pigs and was a 10-year 4-H member, which led me to judging livestock in FFA in high school."

"I guess what draws me to agriculture is I want to pursue an Ag Communications degree," Lumley said.

Lumley wants to transfer her credits to Purdue University next year.

"Lake Land was an awesome opportunity for me to get into ag," Lumley said. "I have lots of opportunities here that are helping me for my future."

Lumley said Lake Land College has a good reputation when it comes to ag education and several Indiana students have taken advantage of the two-year program.

"My tie to Lake Land was my brother-in-law attended here," Lumley said.

Lumley is active with the Transfer Club at LLC, composed of strictly ag transfer students, Lake Land College collegiate Farm Bureau, and Ag Division peer to peer, working side by side with Ag Division Chair Ryan Orrick.

Lumley is in charge of the Ag Division's



Lake Land College Agriculture Division Chair Ryan Orrick, center, examines some agricultural literature with two of his female Ag students Jenna Wojcik of Cowden, left and Mackenzie Hooten of Gays, right.

Facebook page by going into classrooms and working with professors in the Ag Division to post activities. She supervises the John Deere Tech Program Facebook page.

"I post anything from club events to classroom activities," Lumley said. "Right now I'm helping the livestock merchandising class post articles about their third annual online hog sale."

Lumley looks forward to her career in the agriculture industry and sees herself finishing her university studies with a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Communications from Purdue.

"I will definitely be involved with ag," Lumley said about her future. "I've grown up in it and I love every aspect of it."

"My dream job would be to work for a livestock magazine, writing articles and taking pictures," Lumley said. "So, hopefully I'll make it there, someday."

Former female LLC graduate Ryan Wildman decided to come back to Lake Land College after graduating with a bachelor's degree in science, with a focus on agricultural education, from Southern Illinois University Carbondale and spending 12 years as a high school agriculture teacher.



Photos by Charles Mills
Jenna Wojcik of Cowden waters a plant in the Lake Land College Agricultural Division greenhouse on the Mattoon campus.

"I remember when I went to school here, there were only a handful of us who were females," Wildman said. "I was here from 1997 to 1999."

Wildman has been at Lake Land for four years. She grew up on a small livestock

and grain farm with her two sisters. That gave all three hands-on farming experience. She says her work on the farm helped form her feelings about females working in the farming industry.

"You just had to do the work. It was the way I was brought up," Wildman said. "So, I don't treat the females any differently from the males. I never really considered it a difference."

"I just feel you have to be competent in your area," Wildman added.

Today, Wildman serves as a LLC Agriculture Division business instructor and ag transfer adviser. Wildman said she stays busy working with students who want to transfer from LLC to a four-year university.

"Ag transfer is a major that our students who are planning to go to a four-year university can go into," Wildman said. "We have a lot of students who will transfer out of state and also students who will transfer to universities in state as well."

In Illinois, Wildman said students can transfer to either Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Illinois State University in Normal and Western Illinois University in Macomb. **EDN**



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ANN DETERS

heads Vantage Outsourcing

By Cathy Griffith

Ann Deters loves being in a board room. As chair and CEO of Effingham-based Vantage Outsourcing, Deters has plenty of experience. The entrepreneur co-founded the cataract surgical service provider 25 years ago. Under her helm, the company has grown to now reach over 30 states, bringing the technology to rural America and saving senior citizens long trips to the hospital or surgery center.

Deters' passion for boards began when she was asked by her father to come back to the Effingham area and oversee his company, J.M. Schultz Investment Co. Deters had been working at Price Waterhouse in St. Louis.

J.M. Schultz Investment Co. owned eight different businesses, which meant Deters sat on many boards, often as the only female. The time spent on those boards was a learning experience that taught her how to navigate a board room.

"I learned by watching others and experimenting with different ways of doing things. For example, I found as a female leader that if I posed my beliefs in the form of a question, it was better received than in the form of a statement."

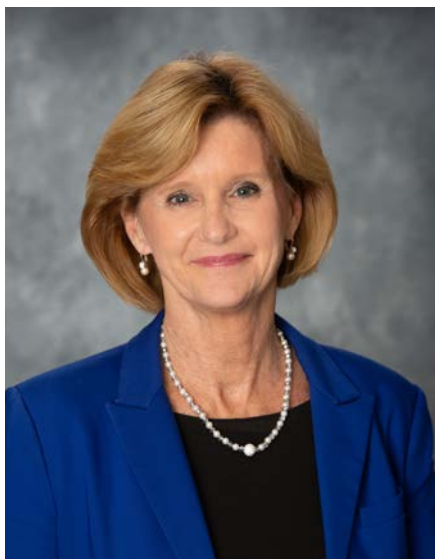
Deters said in learning to work as a woman in a man's world, she focused on being herself, building trust and having respect for others.

"My overall goal was to win people over. I never let the female aspect enter my mind nor the thought that I was not capable of doing a particular job."

Deters believes her ability to win people over stems from her childhood when she used to play basketball in the back yard and was often the only female competing.

She strongly credits her parents for instilling their children with the belief there were no limitations to what they could do. Deters has passed that same belief on to her four sons and daughter, who range in age from 16 to 30.

"We raise them similar to how my par-



ents raised my siblings and me. Rather than saying, 'This is what you should do,' we try to open their world to new experiences and point out various opportunities available to them," she said. "We want them to take in as much as possible and decide for themselves what they will enjoy doing the rest of their life."

Deters said she has always tried to emphasize to people, especially her 16-year-old daughter, that the only person who is going to limit them is themselves.

"You just have to decide what you're going to do, be willing to work hard, and not let others convince you otherwise. Just go for it," she said.

As a mentor of the Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) program for area high school students, Deters said she still sees female students limiting themselves, although she said that is changing.

"Young men will say, 'We're going to do this,' and they say this with confidence. On the flip side, I will mentor a young woman and she knows more about her product and her market than the male counterpart, but for whatever reason fails to exhibit the same level of confidence," she said. "I try to get females to believe in themselves

first. When you can believe in yourself and are fully committed, I think anyone can be successful."

Deters wants to create more opportunities for the next generation. For her, that means staying in the business world and doing what she does best — being a part of boards.

"When I sat back and asked myself, 'What do I enjoy most about business?', it was the board room environment that surfaced to the top of my list. Whether it's strategizing, thinking outside the box, growing people, pushing status quo, expanding businesses, identifying key people to make things happen - all of this is what I truly enjoy."

So Deters said she has worked hard in the last year to get on other boards and that's where she views her future. Deters is currently on the board of a startup financial tech company in New York City and said she enjoys being a resource for the CEO. She is also on the Illinois Liquor Commission Board and is interviewing for two more boards. Her goal is to serve on several for-profit boards.

Deters spent her early career as a member of several nonprofit boards, including Effingham County Chamber of Commerce, YMCA and CASA, to name a few. She currently is trustee for the Lake Land College Board of Trustees.

"I think another thing we try to teach our children is that it's wonderful to have a successful career, but you have to spend a certain amount of time giving back to the community," she said.

Deters uses her career as an example for those, particularly women, who want to be entrepreneurs that success is attainable.

"Would I have ever thought I would be where I am today? Absolutely not. When I look back, my desire to achieve and my problem-solving skills are what got me to where I am today. Were there tough times? Absolutely, but that's life. As my mother would say, 'When life throws you lemons, make lemonade.'" EDN

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Pagel Silver Dollar Lanes

Pagel Silver Dollar Lanes on South Banker is a one-stop-shop with entertainment for the whole family. Co-owners Sheree Limes and Larry Pagel are creating an atmosphere of fun with something for everyone.

"Our customers have a lot to choose from when they visit," shared Limes.

A recent addition is their video gaming lounge. "In 2017 we opened the gaming lounge, which has been popular. We have five games in a separate room for customers to enjoy."

Traditional bowling is available on 24 lanes and they also offer Galaxy Bowling. Bowlers can listen to hit music

while enjoying bowling in the dark.

Each year they host the Silver Dollar Classic tournament. Youth bowlers can qualify at Pagel to move onto the Pepsi Youth Tournament.

Avid bowlers will appreciate their Winter, Summer and Youth leagues. Bowling specials are available on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings. Pagel has a full-service pro shop, and sell balls, shoes, bags and other accessories.

The fun doesn't stop with bowling. Pagel has two pool tables and host frequent pool tournaments for competitive players. Dart boards are always in play, and darts tournaments offer a way to test

one's skills.

Limes adds, "We are available for private parties, and have several packages a customer may choose. We have an ideal space to host birthday parties, church gatherings, corporate events and post-prom parties."

Pagel Silver Dollar Lanes is open seven days a week during the winter, with summer hours in effect May through August.

For more information, follow them on Facebook at Pagel Silver Dollar Lanes, visit www.silverdollarlanes.com, email silverdollar@effingham.net, or call 217-342-3939.



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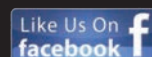
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The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic



Pictured left to right: Cathy Raddatz, RN, Julie Schumacher, Janene Swingler, Emily Boyajian, NP, Ruben Boyajian, MD and Shelby Overbeck, RN.

The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic of Ruben Boyajian, MD, and Emily Boyajian, NP, relocated to the newly built St. Anthony's Health Center at 900 West Temple, Building B, Suite 2500 in Effingham IL in January of this year. The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic provides evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the breast, multidisciplinary oncology care, gastrointestinal endoscopy and laparoscopic procedures.

Ruben Boyajian, MD, owner, is an active member of the American Society of Breast Surgeons, the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the Society of Surgical Oncology. He is also the Director of the Women's Wellness and Cancer Services at St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital. The Women's Wellness and Cancer Services of St. Anthony's main objective is promoting the early detection

of breast cancer as well as other services such as dexta scanning, lactation services, etc. In addition to all this, Ruben received certification by the MD Anderson Cancer Center in 2018. And, Ruben has been voted as the People's Choice Best Surgeon by Effingham Daily News readers since 2004. He was honored in 2014 with the Effingham County Citizen of the Year Award for his countless hours helping many organizations in Effingham County and beyond. His dedication to his patients and his expertise sets him apart in his field.

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

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

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

WE HAVE RELOCATED

The Breast and Surgical Care Clinic of Dr. Ruben Boyajian, and Emily Boyajian, nurse practitioner, has relocated to the new HSHS St. Anthony's Health Center, located at 900 West Temple Ave., Bldg B, Effingham, IL. The office is located on the 2nd floor, Suite 2500. The phone number remains 217-347-2255.

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Ruben Boyajian, MD



Emily Boyajian, NP



Evergreen Nursing & Rehabilitation

Evergreen Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, a Helia Healthcare Facility, was established in 1974 by a group of civil-minded individuals with a desire to set a standard of excellence in skilled nursing services and long-term care.

Since that time, Evergreen Nursing & Rehabilitation has continued to meet the needs of the community by providing quality long and short term care. We now offer private short-term Medicare suites.

A massive renovation has been completed on several of our wings - offering residents newly remodeled suites with a refrigerator, television and recliner to enjoy their experience at Evergreen.

Because of our diverse services, we care for patients with a variety of skilled medical needs, including complex medical or respiratory illnesses, traumatic brain injuries, stroke recovery, post-surgical care and orthopedic rehabilitation.

Our comprehensive services focus on our patient's physical, mental and emotional needs.

Our nursing and rehabilitation services benefit patients who may no longer need treatment in a hospital setting, but require continued medical intervention or rehabilitation on a short-term basis, before returning home.

Long term care is also available for those who are suffering from a prolonged acute illness or chronic disease, or for those who simply can no longer live alone at home.

Our professional staff members – from our caregiving team to our friendly support staff – provide a compassionate and supportive environment for healing and recovery. Our caregivers are pre-screened prior to employment, and they have a commitment to provide the very best care possible for our residents. We are fortunate

that many of our staff members have been with us for several years, providing longevity and experience unique to our profession.

Patients and their families are encouraged to help us develop a plan of care that meets the patient's physical, social and emotional needs. Whether your stay is short-term or long-term, we work together to help you settle in and feel at home with us.

For residents who plan to return home, we begin discharge planning right away to set realistic expectations and goals, and to coordinate care to ensure a safe return home. As discharge approaches, we may coordinate services through our partners in care to help you in the transition, and to provide continuity of care.

For more information contact Adra Ballwin, Administrator, at 217-347-7121.



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Effingham Veterinary Clinic

Effingham Veterinary Clinic is a locally owned business that has been serving our community since 1973. It has seven full-time veterinarians, who have a combined experience of 90 years in the industry, who can perform soft tissue surgery, organ biopsy, bladder surgery and skin procedures.

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

Effingham Veterinary Clinic is your go-to stop for high-quality pet diagnostics, among other services offered. Whether your pet is sick, hurt or just needs preventative care, Effingham Veterinary Clinic can offer the services needed in one stop. They provide services such as full lab work, digital X-rays, ultrasound and blood and urine analysis. From spaying

and neutering to full-fledged surgery and orthopedics, as well as farm services, it is all available at Effingham Veterinary Clinic.

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

The veterinarians at Effingham Veterinary Clinic are compassionate and always strive to provide the highest quality of care to all of their pet patients. Pet wellness is one of the top priorities for the staff at Effingham Veterinary Clinic, as well as making sure that your expectations are exceeded with the quality of

service you receive and making sure that every experience has the personal touch and commitment that goes above and beyond.

One of the main reasons Effingham Veterinary Clinic continues to stand out in its field is because of its innovative and sustainable veterinary care services for most species. The staff uses the latest veterinary techniques and best practices in veterinary care. All of the veterinarians are DVM certified and attend ongoing training to keep abreast of all the changes in the industry and veterinary care.

Effingham Veterinary Clinic is proud to have received the Effingham Daily News People's Choice Award for Best Veterinary Clinic and Best Veterinarian, Dr. Chad Ely in 2018, as well as welcoming its newest doctor, Dr. Tanner Kirby.

Follow Effingham Veterinary Clinic on Facebook at Effingham Veterinary Clinic or visit the website at effinghamvetclinic.com



Dr. Chad Ely
Dr. Dale Spindler
Dr. Mara Nix
Dr. Lindsey Goeckner
Dr. James Gratz
Dr. Tanner Kirby

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Effingham County Health Department

Effingham County Health Department's Effingham County Connections Program creates new opportunities for families with young children.

The Effingham County Health Department (ECHD) has been making the health of Effingham County a priority since 1946. In an effort to continue that trend, ECHD added the Effingham County Connections program to serve 0-3 age children and prenatal mothers in Summer 2018. This program is funded through the Illinois State Board of Education: Early Childhood Block Grant-Prevention Initiative program and uses Parents as Teachers (PAT) Curriculum, which empowers parents to be the child's primary teacher. PAT is a scientifically proven approach to improve the academic preparedness of the child from

birth (www.parentsasteachers.org)!

The program consists of home visits made by trained parent educators. At the home visit, educators promote literacy; conduct developmental, health, hearing and vision screenings; provide goal planning assistance; and connect families to resources. In addition, families are invited to participate in the program's monthly play group and educational connections. There is no cost for a family to participate. Eligibility is based on numerous barriers that could impede a child's success in school such as developmental delays, homelessness, DCFS involvement, or low family income.

Data collected in the Effingham County community health assessment and conversations with educators and social services indicated a great need for

early childhood programs. National research shows that for every \$1 spent on early childhood programs, \$8 is saved in future tax dollars (National Conference of State Legislatures, Early Education as Economic Investment, Clothier & Poppe). ECHD received funding to serve 140 children and 120 families annually for the next five years; infusing over \$560,000 into the local economy and helping more than 500 local children!

Effingham County Connections' goal is to provide educational resources for families to improve their quality of life. Parenting is hard but through supportive programs like Effingham County Connections, the job can be a little easier.

For more information, call 217-342-9237, email: sweidner@healthdept.org or visit www.effcohealth.org.



Parents as Teachers.

Effingham County Health Department
Effingham County Connections
 An Early Learning Personal Visit Program

901 West Virginia Avenue,
 Effingham, Illinois 62401
 Phone: 217-342-9237
 Fax (217) 342-9324

This 4th Generation Family Business Just Celebrated its 130th Anniversary.... and Has No Plans of Slowing Down Soon.

A lot has changed since George W. Wright first opened Wright's Furniture & Flooring in 1889. The business, which was once both a furniture store and funeral home, was much smaller in size and run by only a handful of employees. Fast-forward 130 years later, the business now employs more than 25 people and has a 50,000 square foot showroom. The business also recently opened a new location in Robinson, Illinois and will be expanding their Wright at Home Interiors store to 507 East Fayette Avenue in Effingham in early 2019.

Chairman Tom Wright said that while the business has seen significant growth over the years, their commitment to customer service has remained the same.



“We’ve always tried to focus our business on providing a service to clients and building relationships,” said Wright. “We understand how important it is to make the right decisions when it comes to selecting furniture and flooring for your home. That is why we offer so many brands and hundreds of styles and fabrics. You can combine elements of color, style, comfort, and price to get the furniture and flooring that is perfect for you and your family.”

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

For more information about Wright's Furniture & Flooring, visit WrightsFurniture.com or call 217.925.5228.



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Company Celebrates 20 Years as Pool & Spa Experts

W.E.T. Pools & Spas

Water Equipment Technologies, Inc., better known as W.E.T. Pools & Spas, has been serving the community since 1996. W.E.T. started as a pressure washer sales and service business and in 1999 became a full-service pool dealer. This year they will celebrate their 20th Year Anniversary with special events throughout the year.

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

"Pools and spas are our specialty," said Tammy Quast, who has been with the company since 1998. "We have sold pools as far away as Osage Beach, Missouri and Nashville, Tennessee," she continued. Their most popular style is the

rectangular 16x40. The company sells, installs and services pools and spas.

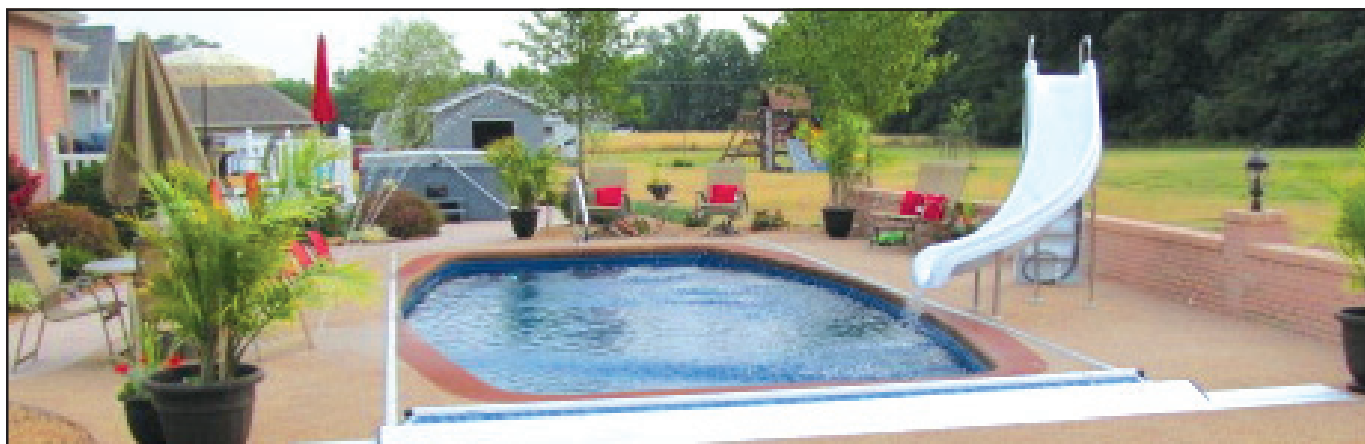
W.E.T. is a retailer for BioGuard chemicals for maintaining a beautiful pool. Their customers can take advantage of W.E.T.'s expertise to keep their investment looking its best.

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

W.E.T. will be bringing in new prod-

ucts this spring to create the ultimate barbeque experience. Their staff recently returned from a trade show to research new products. "We have premium Kamado Grills now in our showroom. They are an egg-style grill that has received great reviews. They are a huge hit with backyard chefs in our area."

"We will be scheduling our spring open house soon, so the public can view all we have to offer," said Quast. Follow W.E.T. Pools & Spas on Facebook to learn more about upcoming events and classes.



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**Doug Thoele
Owner**



Kastle joins Civil Design

Civil Design, Inc.

In February, Civil Design, Inc. (CDI) will be welcoming a new staff member to their Effingham branch office. Maureen E. Kastl, PE will be joining the company as a Senior Project Manager after over 34 years of service at IDOT. In December, Maureen retired as the Engineer of Local Roads in the Office of Planning and Programming. She and her husband Dave reside in the Green Creek area and they have 3 grown children Austin, Elizabeth and Alex.

CDI has 65 employees, including 25 professional engineers (PE), 3 licensed land surveyors (PLS), 4 structural engineers (SE), a GIS professional (GISP), a professional traffic operation engineer (PTOE), and a landscape architect (LA).

CDI is a multi-disciplined civil engineering and surveying firm established in 1996, with a focus on helping clients design quality infrastructure through

successful, results-based projects. Our insight and experience, centered on Building Stronger Communities, allows us to empower our clients to make intelligent decisions on how to apply resources in the best way for their community. The firm specializes in site development, land surveying, roadway design, water/wastewater design, structural engineering and geographical information services (GIS).

With offices in St. Louis, Missouri, Louisville, Kentucky, and Granite City, Illinois our people leverage their backgrounds with large, nationally recognized companies and small engineering firms alike to provide the best of both worlds for the benefit of our clients.

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www.CivilDesignInc.com

Providing specialty and advanced pet care

Advanced Veterinary Care

A newer, warm and inviting veterinary clinic that is nestled back in the South Town business district is homage to the people of Effingham. Located at 700 W. Wabash in Effingham, Advanced Veterinary Care celebrated their four year anniversary on February 2.

The staff's warm and inviting nature is apparent in all that they do and they welcome people through the doors, not just as customers, but as friends as well. They hold a desire to get to know both the patient and owner on a more personal level.

Through their growth over the last four years, they have had the opportunity to welcome a new addition to their team

last year, Dr. Becky Combs, who brings major assets to the team.

Dr. Brittany Ishmael specializes in orthopedic and soft tissue surgeries, as well as dermatology and allergy care.

Last year the clinic announced the addition of the Advanced Dental Imagery for pets and animals, which helps to identify a potential problem in your pet. Your pet's oral health affects their overall health. To keep your pet healthy, start with their teeth. Bad breath could mean problems.

It is clear to see there is a wide range of specialties and talent for all your small and large animal care. They offer 24 Hour Emergency Care and are on call

365 days a year.

Although a newer business, you can clearly see that growth is happening and all their clients leave here happy every day. This has led to the ideas of expansion to help a larger scope of people.

Doctor Ishmael is looking toward the future with a specialized facility for the hospitalization of sick horses so that they can have the care needed around the clock to get their gallop back.

Advanced Veterinary Care is a wonderful, companion animal clinic that tackles all of your needs and gives care to your pets as well as providing ease of mind to any pet and animal owner.

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Effingham favorite celebrates 41st anniversary

Niemerg's Steakhouse

Niemerg's Steakhouse, a multi-generation Effingham favorite, will celebrate its 41st anniversary in September. The restaurant serves more than 2,000 people per day and is a destination for locals and travelers.

The thriving business has had seven additions since Gene Niemerg and Dennis Sandschafer opened in 1978. Their team is 176 employees strong, with many long-timers. That longevity is a point of pride. Gene Niemerg muses, "I believe we have several 35-year anniversaries coming up."

Employees become a family. Often students who come to work at Niemerg's as high school teens, remain through their college years. Niemerg's supports student-employees with flexible schedules to accommodate sports and

scholarships. Student-employees benefit from a scholarship program; \$20,000 in scholarships are awarded yearly. Employees are part of a bonus plan to share in the success.

The warm environment built an admirable business. Niemerg comments, "When I tell people about our restaurant, the first thing I share is that we have outstanding employees. I'm proud of their work-ethic and community mindedness."

While fried chicken and pies may be their claim to fame, that commitment to community truly shines. Employees and the business donate to United Way. The team supports Catholic Charities and the Carl P. Koerner Memorial Sports Spectacular.

Today's successful business was built with many family and friends. Niemerg

shares, "Our cookies are really popular. My favorite is the oatmeal raisin cookie which is Lucy Westendorf's recipe, and she still makes cookies for us a couple times a week." Niemerg's sister, Cathy Walk, manages the bakery. Early bakers included Martha Niemerg, Dorothy Holkenbrink, Bev Obert, Antoinette Feldhake, Lorraine Lidy and Pauline Roepke. Emma, Martha and Helen Niemerg were the early pie bakers whose skills brought in the crowds.

With a firm foundation, the support of a hungry community and the dedication of their talented team, Niemerg's is ready to celebrate their 41st anniversary and plan for the next four decades.

Niemerg's Steakhouse

Celebrating Our 41st Anniversary - 1978-2019



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For over 150 years, Bank of Hillsboro has been committed to supporting local communities and helping our customers meet their financial needs. Our philosophy is simple; we reinvest your dollars back into the communities where you live and work. When you bank with Bank of Hillsboro, you're helping your neighbors build their homes, local farmers buy their seed, and small businesses sell their products and services.

The wonderful advantage we have at Bank of Hillsboro is that we are small enough to know our customers by name, but large enough to offer the wide array of banking services our customers are looking for and go the extra mile to make it happen.

We recently went through a major name change from National Bank to Bank of Hillsboro in order to better reflect our home town values. We are hard-working, friendly people, just like the customers we've served for generations.

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This year is a unique year for Car Corral, as 2019 marks 31 years as a local used car business, and 21 years as your local Polaris dealer.

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They also offer toy haulers from Fury, utility trailers, and used campers.

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 21 years and is an expert in all facets of Polaris and Can-Am powersports sales, service, and overall management.

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

Car Corral is family owned and

operated and can provide you with the latest and best in powersports products to make your outdoor living more enjoyable. From the most recent in ATV technology to the hottest new side by side, they can help you find the recreational vehicle made for you. Combine this wide array of selections with their friendly and knowledgeable staff, and Car Corral will become your only stop for all of your powersports needs.

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LLC INNOVATION CLASS

creates ‘modern day Thomas Edisons’

By Dawn Schabbing

MATTOON — A class described by the instructor as “nerd recess” at Lake Land College is as diverse as building home automation to thinking outside the box with a banana piano.

Whatever is created most likely requires brainpower and plenty of trial and error.

LLC’s Innovation Class has no prerequisites, except the willingness to learn and have some interest in technology, said the IT Instructor at Lake Land College, Scott Rhine.

Innovation Class started as Human Computer Interaction Lab around 2009 and was only offered in the summer. Rhine revamped the course about three years ago, creating Innovation I and Innovation II, offering it also in the fall and spring semesters at night.

Rhine estimates he’s led 100 students through it so far.

“I’m shocked this is a class. It is nerd recess,” said Rhine. “But it ends up being a really hard class because there is no answer key. It’s all about research and troubleshooting during the whole class. There are some common themes, but everything is different.”

During a recent open house at Webb Hall in Mattoon, students with varying interests and talents showed off their projects to the community.

Projects included an LED Star, an LED Light Clock, Weather Station, an Automatic Cat Feeder, LCD Stick Man Game, RetroPie Arcade System and lava computer speakers with sound reactive LED system.

Some students even figured out how to use a bunch of bananas that mimic piano keys connected to a computer. The users connect the bananas to a computer program using a circuit board, some clips and a USB cable.

The course is offered on Wednesday nights from 6 to 9:40 p.m. and will be offered in the spring and summer at Lake Land.

“Almost everyone in the class has no

idea what is going on,” said Rhine. “But almost everyone in the class says, ‘I like building stuff’ and ‘I like cool technology,’ so I start out teaching students how to solder and everyone gets a starter kit with all the electronic parts so they can do all kinds of projects.”

Rhine said the kit will allow them to set up sensors, work with motors, and a little bit of everything they can do with a micro controller.

“I start showing off projects and guide them to places like (website) ‘Instructables,’ which are recipes on how to build things,” said Rhine. “Some projects might take an hour or two – and some spread across two or even three semesters.”

After mid-term, students are turned loose to build their projects when the class transitions to another level.

“I go from teacher to assistant,” said Rhine. “I have to scale up or scale down everyone’s ideas to fit what I think they can actually pull off by the end of the class.

Sometimes there are monumental issues and it often takes a ton of work to get everyone through.”

Graded on progress

“The bizarre thing for this class is the student is graded on progress,” said Rhine. “Some want a small, easy project. But, it is about progress. The grade isn’t about completion. It is about progress.”

Rhine said in some cases, larger projects have been started and some still needed completion the next semester by another group.

One ongoing project is that of a World Map made out of recycled computer parts. In it are parts that have been cut to the shapes of continents across the world. The map so far has recycled parts, such as motherboards, RAM sticks, CPU fans and more.

Dylan Harper of Mattoon started working on the world map this semester, and this is his second semester in Innovation



Photos by Dawn Schabbing

Dylan Harper of Mattoon explains how he and other students are making an illuminated world map out of recycled computer parts such as RAM sticks, CPU fans and motherboards.

classes. He is transferring to Eastern Illinois University to further his education.

"I took Innovation II this semester just to work on this world map," said Harper. "Scott Rhine suggested this idea in the summer. I just graduated with an associate's in network administration. I like working with computers. I'm really optimistic, but unfortunately I won't be around here much to see to the finished product."

He estimates he has about 40 hours into the project and his lab partner, Tyler McMahan, 26, of Bethany, an Innovation III student, has that and more.

"He did most of the cutting of the continents," said Harper. "I did Africa and bits of North America. I took care of parts of Russia, too."

"Africa is the only one we color planned to show the Sahara Desert. If you look at satellite images of Africa, you'll see more desert and sand in these areas. We took a stick or ram and cut it up, to make a curved area."

There are several CPU fans and several CPUs scattered around and some C-mos batteries here and there. He mostly focused on Africa and parts of North America and Russia.

Yet to come are Japan, New Zealand, Cuba and some others.

Rhine has been collecting recycled parts for two years to make the world map. But there's still more brainstorming and more work to do.

"I hope by the summer it will be posted out on the wall," Rhine said. "At the bottom, we want to put 'IT opens up a world of possibilities.'"

Creativity and innovation

A project by Thomas Eichinger of Casey let him enjoy the sound of music from his reactive LED speaker system.

The red lights glow to the beat and glow brighter as the sounds get louder.

"At first, the sheer freewill you're given was kind of intimidating," said Eichinger. "I was afraid that I wouldn't do well since there wasn't a right path. But now I wish more classes were like this."

Another student wanted to create a way to be sure each of his cats are fed the appropriate amount of food, so he built an automatic cat feeder.

Tyler Fisher of Mattoon created a system that has a chip inside a tag hooked to the cat's collar. It will trigger the food supply.

"They can just brush up against it and the chip, which has an ID in it, registers to the motor, which drops the right amount of food for each (identified) cat," said Fisher.

Fisher said he and his wife have three

cats and they want to be sure each cat gets the right amount of food when they are away at school and work.

He said this Innovation class is one of the coolest he's taken. It is about breaking boundaries of one's imagination, he said.

Colten Miller of St. Elmo submitted an infinity mirror. He enjoyed learning about circuit board wiring, soldering and programming.

"The open approach of being able to choose what you wanted to do made the class much more interesting," said Miller.

Jordan Bear of Neoga said the class offers freedom to be creative. Among his projects is a 3-D Printed Weather and Information Station.

Bear said it gives real-time weather and time information, as well as a three-day forecast. It displays the information on the LED screen and updates every 10 minutes.

Rhine said sometimes it is hard for students to wrap their heads around project ideas. Projects have been started and some still needed completion, such as a Skee-Ball machine, a pinball machine, or a video game console.

"I tell them find something they like to do or something they are interested in," said Rhine. "This is like when someone is super hungry and they go to a really awesome buffet."

There are so many choices, but they can only pick a few.

"The best thing about this class is you are free to imagine and create," said Bear. "It provides extra motivation for each student because you can create something you are passionate about."

Matthew Pointon of Charleston said finding a project to tackle was hard. He admitted he picked a relatively simple project, which was a star with changing LED lights, with a push of a button.

LLC President Josh Bullock called Rhine's innovation program amazing.

"The cool thing is that this class teaches people to think innovatively," said Bullock. "It has them think outside of their comfort zone and think differently about technology."

Bullock added that the students use 3-D printing and produce some things at low cost, including finger prosthetics and lower-arm prosthetics. These are still in the exploration stages and are not yet medical grade, but progress is being made, Rhine said.

"What I love about it is that it's an opportunity for students to learn something new and showcase it for the community," said Bullock. "We are creating modern-day Thomas Edisons." **EDN**



Tyler Fisher explains how his automatic cat feeder works as Instructor Scott Rhine looks inside the project, during an open house at Lake Land College.



Matthew Pointon of Charleston demonstrates how his LED-lighted star can change colors with the push of a button.



Innovation Instructor Scott Rhine leans on a pinball machine a previous student created.

Effingham County Chamber of Commerce

The Effingham County Chamber of Commerce is an organization focused on providing community and business leadership and support. Some examples of projects currently underway include the ongoing development of the Effingham Regional Career Academy, the launching of a mobile app that connects the local community with the information and resources they need to do business locally, and the growth of the chamber's Business Outreach Center services that assist in business growth and development across Effingham County.

Through focused engagement with some of our area business leaders, the chamber has identified one of the key

business issues facing employers in 2019: There are simply not enough skilled workers for the positions available in the county. The chamber is taking a proactive approach to help address the needs for a skilled workforce. We are excited to engage in more in-depth discussions with area employers to help determine the best way to resolve this issue.

"It is critical that employers lead this discussion and direct the chamber in the best direction to take to resolve the problem," said Chamber President and CEO Norma Lansing. "Every successful program we have seen within our own county, as well as across the country is

successful due to the involvement of key company leaders." Lansing said.

In addition to helping area businesses secure the skilled workers they need, the chamber has been deeply involved in the creation of The Effingham Regional Career Academy (ERCA), a new skill-specific training school. This new educational option for students and adults alike will become a reality in the next three years. The goal is to help create more opportunities for people seeking to improve their skills and increase their opportunities for better jobs. Focus groups are ongoing in the first five curriculum areas to be offered by ERCA: Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Health Care,



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Information Technology and Automotive/Transportation. Funding for the building construction has been secured through a commitment by the Lake Land College Board of Trustees and project awareness is available through the dedicated website: erca.us.

The Effingham Area Connect app will be available soon for download! The app will feature local business and community information, and is intended to be a go-to resource for local events and activities. It will even include business deals and discounts to help keep shopping dollars local.

The Business Outreach Center provides services to individuals and businesses who want to start and grow their business in Effingham County. Experienced and knowledgeable business mentors provide advice on business planning, start-up, operations management and growth as well as referrals to professional assistance, as needed. Those requesting assistance are purposefully paired with mentors possessing the skills needed to get the relationship off on a positive note.

The Chamber Board of Directors adopted a new mission and vision in 2018, affirming the Chamber's role as a leader in efforts focused on business growth and development through collaborative partnerships and strategic initiatives. In 2019, the chamber will move toward development of a new chamber logo representing the three C's of Create, Connect and Collaborate and update the website, effinghamcountychamber.com.

With a membership of over 550 businesses that represent over 15,000 employees, the chamber has the strength to gain the attention of businesses looking for opportunities to grow and expand their operations, as well as government and community leaders at the local, state and federal level who want to better understand local community needs and invest in the community's growth.



The new Effingham Police Department station is shown.

Photo by Dawn Schabbing

COMMUNITY UPDATES

Effingham

- The construction of the new 26,457-square-foot, state-of-the-art Effingham City Police Station is complete. The new station provides more office space, a larger lobby area and more room for training, processing, storage of evidence and more.

- Effingham was designated as an Opportunity Zone in 2018 as a part of a federal initiative that has the potential to be an innovative economic development tool that utilizes private equity.

- The Village Square Mall saw a change of ownership for its middle section involving RMC Cinemas and a major renovation plan. Douglas Nobbe, operations manager for RMC, said the additional space will allow the theater to expand with up to two more auditoriums, a larger concession area and a large lobby.

- Mayor Jeff Bloemker said North Keller Drive continues its "juggernaut path" of retail and restaurant development and innovation. A traffic study was completed with more scrutiny relative to ingress and egress to come.

- Retail tax generation has continued on a record pace for the city, Bloemker said. Public Works and infrastructure projects have also continued at record speed, creating what Bloemker called an "exceptional quality of life for the people of Effingham."

- The city also went through some orga-

nizational development: Steve Miller is the new city administrator and Bob Tutko is the new fire chief.

"In 2018, Effingham carried on with its mission to be the shining diamond of downstate Illinois. Business development was robust. Residential development was on pace well beyond other downstate communities," Bloemker said. "Our downtown area is becoming the envy of the state with great retail store occupancy and phenomenal events. I'm incredibly proud of this community and her energy, creativity and momentum."

Bloemker said in 2019, the city of Effingham:

- Plans to use a CDAP grant for a water main project on Franklin and Lawrence Avenues and Cherry and Maple Streets.

- Will replace the Jefferson Avenue water main, and a major reconstruction project on Jefferson Avenue will follow.

- Will begin a project on Outer Belt West North, which will include a 10-foot-wide trail, street lights, entrances and erosion control.

- Plans to widen Ford Avenue to accommodate a center turn lane and the addition of traffic signals at Oak Pointe and Ford Avenue as a part of the upcoming Meijer project.

- Plans to add a box culvert and begin a reconstruction project on Rickelman Avenue.

- Looks to resurface Wabash Avenue from Fourth Street to the railroad tracks. Will replace the water main along Route 40 from John Deere Road to Crystal Club Road.
- Will add UV lighting at the sewer plant for disinfection purposes.
- Plans to add onto the public properties building.

Teutopolis

The village:

- Set aside the gambling proceeds to fund wireless water meter readers.
 - Consulted with American Fiber Connect to install fiber optic internet, TV and phone service throughout the village.
 - Installed a new sanitary sewer deep enough to service the southwest part of town in the future.
 - Purchased a new truck and squad car.
 - Consulted with Bob Rowe from Pure Architecture Studio to begin preliminary plans for a new Village Hall.
 - Completed construction of a new truck access road, sanitary sewer and water at Farmweld.
 - Issued 30 building permits.
- Other Developments:
- Roepke Garage Doors built a new building on Commercial Drive.
 - A new beauty salon and fitness center called Meraki (doing something with soul, creativity and love) was built on Main Street.

- Siemer Milling Co. built a new 3,800-square-foot, seven-story flour storage facility.
- Stevens Industries is constructing a large addition to the north end of its building to house new state-of-the art machinery, enabling the company to keep up with demand.
- Phase I of the Prairie View Subdivision, containing 29 lots, is open. Seventeen lots have been sold and 10 homes are under construction.

Altamont

- Construction of the Altamont Senior Residences is expected to be complete by the end of this year or the beginning of next year. The new construction is located at 406-506 E. Cumberland Road and features a plan for 24 one-bedroom apartments and six two-bedroom apartments.
- Vault Five, a new boutique, opened in downtown Altamont at 5 North Main St. in January. It's owned by Kim Bouas. The store is located just north of Wolf Creek Antique Mall.
- Two new ornament booths are planned to open this year in the Wolf Creek Antique Mall, located at 3 North Main St. The booths will feature antique ornaments for all holidays including Christmas.
- A new restaurant has opened in Altamont called the Feedin' Frenzy, located at 301 East Cumberland Road (Route 40).
- A new home for Subway is planned to

open near the Interstate 70 exit this year. The business will move from its current location across South Main Street.

- The Effingham County Fair is turning 75 years old this year. This year's fair will be Saturday, July 27 through Saturday, Aug. 3. A commemorative 75th anniversary book about the fair is planned.

Dieterich

- In 2018, the Village of Dieterich completed a large sidewalk project that included some new storm sewers in 2018. It also installed three brand new pedestrian bridges as a part of this sidewalk project.
- Wabash Communications acquired Montrose Mutual Telephone Company, but the Montrose Mutual Telephone Company name will remain. They are working to get Fiber to Home for all of the Montrose Mutual customers.
- EJ Water and Wabash Communications joined forces and created a business called Illinois Fiber Connect to get fiber lines to homes in the area not already served by Montrose Mutual.
- Lindsay's Pre-Finishing is a new business in the Industrial Park.
- APT (Advanced Powder Technology) expanded and recently started selling a new line of Cricket neighborhood vehicles.
- Higgs Welding just expanded to start selling several new lines of large trucks.
- Dollar General should open sometime this summer.
- Existing businesses that have planned expansions for 2019 are Emmerich Automotive, James Backhoe/Septic Solutions and Candle Art. Emmerich and James are building new buildings and Candle Art has plans to add on to its existing facility.
- The Dieterich Unit 30 School District started a Helping Hands organization that provides weekend food for students in need. Feel free to contact the school for more info.

Beecher City

- Construction on a pavilion attached to the west side of the Beecher City Kluthe Center continues in Beecher City Park. Fundraising efforts are underway for the final phase of the pavilion project.
- A new concession stand is planned in the park close to the tractor-pull area. Last year the baseball diamond was renamed Jones Field after the Jones brothers, who built it in the mid-1940s.
- Rhodie's Ice Cream and More will open this summer. The ice cream stand is owned by Truman Rhodes and located on North Charles Street across from the Beecher City Foodliner and north of



Kim Bouas opened Vault Five women's boutique in downtown Altamont in January of this year.

Photo by Charles Mills

Rhodes Automotive Service. He opened the stand as part of his CEO project while a senior at Beecher City Junior-Senior High School. The stand will be open after Rhodes returns from his university studies in the St. Louis area this summer.

- Beecher City is replacing its early warning siren. The siren should be in operation by spring and will be controlled and operated by Effingham County 911.

Shumway

Enduring Freedom Ministries, under the leadership of Executive Director Vickie Kight, started a soup kitchen in June to add to its clothing and food pantry services. The organization uses the former Shumway Grade School for its base of operations. Emil and Melissa Lagerhausen purchased the grade school building at auction in September 2010 and allowed Enduring Freedom Ministries to use it. In October, the Lagerhausens donated the building to Enduring Freedom Ministries.

Neoga

- The city replaced more than 10 blocks of water lines on East 6th Street. It purchased four additional lots on Oak Avenue and cleared them for potential development.

- It also purchased the old school and is using it as the Neoga Community Center, which has a day care center, Eastern Illinois Area Special Education, a food pantry, and Backpack Ministry. Space in the building can be rented for meetings, birthday parties and other occasions.

- The city has obtained a grant to rehabilitate houses on the east side of town.

Stewardson

An old brick building on the corner of Main and Pine Streets has housed a bank, a doctor's office and a dance studio over the past 100 years. The building was remodeled and opened last September as a bar called The Brew Bank.

Strasburg

- The village finished its water line replacement in 2018.

- The Strasburg Community Action Network also held several fundraisers.

Greenup

- A new auto body shop called the Damage Company opened at the end of September 2018 on the west side of the municipal building by the post office.

- Calamity Janes, a boutique that sells different types of clothing, opened near Chances R Sports Bar and Grill.

- Kocher Septic Systems opened in

2018.

Newton

- The Newton Medical Complex is expected to open in February or March, according to Mayor Mark Bolander. The complex will include suites for X-rays, blood work and diagnostics, extended care and the doctor and his staff.

- Bolander said Dollar General will have a new location, potentially by the end of 2019.

- Riverwalk construction will not start until 2020, but officials are still accepting donations and pledges.

- Newton Lake was considered one of the best year-round bass fishing lakes in the country by Bassmaster magazine.

- Bolander said a new diner is coming to town, possibly in March. It will be called the Little Diner.

- The Jasper County Health Department is now expanding to cover Richland, Lawrence and Crawford counties.

St. Elmo

- The city has a \$500,000 grant to install water lines. Water lines are planned from the west end of town to Elm Street, according to Mayor Ernie Myers.

- Last year the city annexed St. Elmo Golf Club into city limits.

- A sewer line and lift station was built south of the city, south of Interstate 70, last year to facilitate business growth and development in the area south and north of Interstate 70 exit 76. Plus, improvements were made to the St. Elmo water tower.

- Road improvements were made last year on Brewbaker Drive, south of St. Elmo, to help traffic coming and going from Pinnacle Foods Inc. According to Myers, the newly built 755,000-plus-square-foot warehouse next to the Pinnacle Foods Inc. is expected to be fully operational by April, after the Conagra Brands acquisition of Pinnacle Foods Inc. is final.

The warehouse operation has 70 truck bays, according to Myers, who added the warehouse is being leased and managed by Ryder System Inc., and will fill approximately 120 warehouse positions. Myers said when the warehouse is fully operational he estimates 200 trucks will be going in and out of the



Photo by Charles Mills

This past year the City of St. Elmo restored their water tower last year by painting both the inside and outside of the tower.

warehouse daily.

- A 40-lot subdivision is under construction between Route 40 and Tower Lake south of St. Elmo. Three homes are being built so far. Myers said the sewer and water mains have already been run to the new subdivision.

Brownstown

- The village has applied for a grant/loan from the USDA for a proposed waterline replacement project that extends east from Brownstown to St. Elmo. New water meters for the village would also be part of the grant/loan.

- Planning for the Brownstown 150th Celebration for 2020 will begin this summer.



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Kinmundy

The town completed a housing rehabilitation grant in 2018. It also completed an efficiency study on the sewer system.

Toledo

• Mayor John Beck said the biggest accomplishment has been the opening of the Neal Center YMCA. The two-floor, 33,000-square-foot facility includes a swimming pool, gymnasium with a basketball court, child watch area, fitness studio and walking track. The Neal Center is a branch of the Mattoon YMCA.

• A new firehouse was completed on the square last year. It's located on the southeast corner of the square. 



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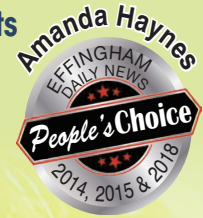
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