Leading the Way:

Investing in a Better Future



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Invest in yourself, community



At a forum back in January, an area investor noted that companies started during downturns often have bigger long-term returns than those started when times are better. As we started considering a theme for the 2009 version of Leading The Way, we considered various kinds of investments, from the financial type to investments of ideas that the East Central Illinois Development Corp. offered at a two-day session in Monticello to investments like those people make when they volunteer time.

We considered folks who serve nonprofits and volunteer in any kind of way in an effort to make our region better in the long run. We considered those who make, or might consider making, a financial investment, either in a nonprofit or a for-profit venture.

In a discussion with Norma Lansing at the Effingham chamber, we talked about ways that local business and industry helps each other through timely delivery of products and services. Mary Wetzel at the Mattoon chamber noted how the chamber partners with Illinois Eastern Community Colleges to offer a free consultation service. And Cindy Titus and her crew in Charleston have opened a SCORE chapter in partnership with the Business Solutions Center. That project now is expanding to other parts of the region.

All of these are investments of sorts. So this year in Leading The Way, we've taken those ideas and merged them into a publication that highlights various ways of "investing."

This is not an all-inclusive list. Rather, it's an effort to showcase some ways of investing, and hopefully generate some thought and discussion on the topic, and perhaps discover more ways to move things forward.

A special thanks to Annie Hernandez at the Lumpkin Family Foundation. Annie has experience in putting together roundtable discussions like the ones that led to two of the articles in this publication. She did the planning and execution of the roundtables, and she wrote one of the two articles.

I hope you enjoy the latest "Leading the Way." Perhaps it will help you look for more ways you might invest in making our region better.

Contact Carl Walworth at Carl.Walworth@lee.net

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Invest financially in your local nonprofits



By Annie Hernandez,
The Lumpkin Family Foundation

The fact that public charities and nonprofit organizations depend on generous investments from private citizens and businesses to continue their valuable services to our community is stating the obvious. However, what may be less obvious is the fact that these contributions can come in many forms. While cold, hard cash can be the ideal contribution for many organizations, the contribution of goods and services as well as time can be just as valuable. According to the Giving USA 2009 report, charitable giving in the United States reached an estimated $307.65 billion in 2008, a 2 percent drop in current dollars over 2007 (the first decline in giving in current dollars since 1987). The Urban Institute's National Center for Charitable Statistics estimated $2,118,442,283 of charitable giving in Illinois in 2007. Coles County and the surrounding counties are active participants in this giving at an estimated .25%.

Earlier this year, The Lumpkin Family Foundation partnered with the Donors Forum of Illinois to sponsor an economic convening for nonprofits in the region. What we learned from the convening and research completed for the event was that nonprofits in the region are still waiting for "the other shoe to drop." In terms of funding, organizations have not yet felt the impact of lower fundraising—and have not experienced noticeable declines in private fundraising at the close of 2008 or even into 2009. However, most expect to see the declines later this year as the impact of job loss and reduced portfolios starts expressing itself in lower and fewer donations. Local nonprofits who heavily rely on state funding have felt the biggest impact.



Joedy Hightower

So now, more than ever, it is vital to consider investing financially in our community. To obtain some local insight on why it's important to invest financially in the nonprofit sector and ways to accomplish this, I talked to the following local thought leaders…

Joedy Hightower has worked in nonprofit administration for the past 14 years. She joined the Effingham and Mattoon Area Community Foundation as Executive Director in April 2004 from the Effingham County United Way. With the creation of the Southeastern Illinois Community Foundation in January 2009, Hightower was appointed President/CEO and will continue to manage the activities of both community foundations while developing new partnerships in surrounding counties.



Janet Grove

Janet Grove is involved in the general practice of law including trust and estate matters with emphasis on comprehensive estate planning, charitable gifting, business planning, estate administration and probate avoidance. Janet has a B.S. and M.S. degree in horticultural education from Purdue University and graduated from Indiana University School of Law in 1985. Janet's community involvement includes the Planned Giving Information Consortium, Hospice, Lincolnland Visiting Nurses, CCAR Industries, Mattoon Area Community Foundation, Coles County Council on Aging, Douglas-Hart Foundation and Elder Abuse Task Force.

Rick Hall is a lifetime resident of Mattoon who has been involved in community service for over 30 years including United Way, Rotary, Mattoon School Board, Mattoon City Council, Red Cross and others. Hall is a Vice President and General Manager for Consolidated Communications. He has been married for



Rick Hall

35 years to Dalena and has two sons.

Jim Walters is the Executive Director of HOPE and has been with the organization for 11 1/2 years. Walters is also the Treasurer of the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence in Springfield, IL and has a BS from Illinois State University and an MS in Counseling from EIU. He lives in Charleston with his wife, Brandy, and two teenage daughters Murphy (15) and Micah (13); expecting his third child this October.

And here is what they had to say…

What has been your personal best experience in investing financially in our community?

Janet- Mine was seeing the LifeSpan Center come to fruition. I was on the planning committee ten years earlier and having an opportunity to see something as great as the Center happen for our community was very rewarding.

Rick- Anytime I can see the benefits-be it the Rotary scholarships, delivering Peace Meals, United Way disbursements, etc…

Jim- My best recent experience was participating in a 5K for liver research. Not only was I able to raise money for the Walter & Connie Payton Foundation, but I was motivated to make healthy choices to prepare for the race and involve my whole family in the effort.

Joedy- I have loved the opportunity to work with donors and help them find ways to make an impact through the growing community foundations.

What ways/opportunities do you see for people to invest financially in the Coles county and surrounding area?

Jim- If you don't have a specific nonprofit or cause you are passionate about, the best way to provide overall support to the nonprofit community is through the United Way. The United Way disburses funds to the key nonprofits in the area. Another opportunity is to support nonprofit events. While you will probably be asked to donate financially, we also want you to have fun and raise awareness for our issue or cause! For example, when someone buys a bowl at our Bowls of Hope event, we want them to use it at a cookout and tell the story to a friend about the work of HOPE.

Janet- My favorite is donor-directed funds through the community foundations. This is a great way to do what you want and have it be cost effective. Giving back is what counts; not the amount. Every little bit helps! The other advice I like to give is that it is nice to remember a charity in your will but I normally recommend individuals find a way to donate while they are living so they are able to take an income tax deduction.

Joedy- Community Foundations are a great way to give back through nonprofits endowments or as a donor-directed fund. We want to help you find ways to give back that are meaningful to you.

Rick- Every individual needs to find what they are passionate about investing in and then find ways to support organizations or programs that help. I have preferred United Way because they screen the organizations and distribute funds as needed. They are also very active in companies through payroll deductions which makes it easy to give.

Why is it important for people to invest financially in our community?

Joedy- This economic time is making everyone more strategic with their dollars. With the loss of state and federal funding, individual donors become critical to sustain nonprofit budgets. We need you!

Jim- HOPE, like most nonprofits, has operated on a razor thin edge financially for years (HOPE hasn't received an increase in state funding since 2002). The support of the community providing dollars and in-kind donations (like fences and supplies for women leaving the shelter) is what has allowed us to continue our good work of providing for the most vulnerable in our community. When people give, we see as a support of our mission…and as an affirmation of the good work we do. It is a great way to show you care about the community.

Rick- We are lucky to live in a community with lots of nonprofits providing services that are critical to the most vulnerable of our citizens. At this time, more than ever, nonprofit organizations need our financial support.

Janet- Wherever I have lived has given to me and I see this as my opportunity to give back and help others in the community.

What is one thing you wish more people understood about investing financially in the community or with a nonprofit?

Jim- Nonprofits in the area address serious issues and the staff leading these efforts are serious, educated, diverse and dedicated people who find rewards in the work and not financially. Also, organiza-

tions who receive state and federal funding are highly regulated and audited.

Rick- Everyone can give something- either time or money. I would rather have 10 people give $10 each versus 1 person giving $100. And, if you are employed, see how you can get your employer to give too. The more people involved, the more investment it shows in the program or organization. If our nonprofits thrive; our community will too!

Joedy- You do NOT have to be a millionaire to be a philanthropist! Start small and build over time.

Janet- We all want our estates to benefit our children and grandchildren but it is also important to share what you have by reinvesting it in the community. It says thank you to the community…AND sets a great example for generations to come!

The bottomline is that investing financially is a great way to give back to your community. Interestingly, research from the Center on Philanthropy has found that in more rural communities, nonprofits might expect an increase in giving during this economic time as those who are motivated to give, give based on equity (those with more should help those with less) or reciprocity (because a charity helped them or someone they care about).

As you heard from our thought leaders, there are a variety of ways to invest…from cash to in-kind services. If you think you can help, just ask! These days, many nonprofits publish a "wish list" of specific items they need. Through the Community Foundation (www.investinginourcommunity.org), you can set-up a donor-advised fund, designated fund, agency endowment, or scholarship. Also, it is sometimes better to give cash than in-kind donations as nonprofits can leverage the dollars through discounted product pricing or matching grant dollars. The Eastern Illinois Foodbank for example can purchase $10 worth of food for every $1 donated.

Our thought leaders, probably just like you, have had great experiences in participating in something they think makes a difference, and gives something to them and the community. We encourage everyone to make charitable giving a priority…and invest in your area nonprofits. Help make our community the best it can be!

Thought leaders top picks of nonprofits to invest time and money

Douglas-Hart Nature Center
Phone: 217-235-4644
www.dhnature.org
Mission: Through the responsible stewardship of Helen Douglas-Hart's gifts, the Douglas-Hart Foundation will be a leader in promoting the appreciation, enjoyment, and conservation of our natural resources by providing quality programs for all ages.

Coles County Council on Aging RSVP (Retired Seniors Volunteer Program)
Phone: 217-639-5150
www.colescouncilonaging.org
Mission: To enhance quality of life by promoting independence, dignity, self-fulfillment and health for older adults in Coles County through advocacy, education and provision of appropriate community-based services.

HOPE of East Central Illinois
217-348-5931
www.hope-eci.org
Mission: To empower persons to live independent, non-violent lives through the provisions of Housing, Outreach, Prevention, and Education.

Coles County United Way
P.O. Box 868,
Mattoon, IL 61938
Phone: 217-234-8022
www.colesunitedway.org
Mission: To improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities.

Mid Illinois Big Brothers Big Sisters
825 18th St Ste 5
Charleston, IL 61920-2995
Phone: 217-348-8741
Mission: To help children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-to-one relationships with mentors that have a measurable impact on youth.

Fox Ridge Foundation
P.O. Box 714
Charleston, IL 61920-0714
www.foxridgefoundation.org
Mission: The Fox Ridge Foundation is dedicated to the continued improvement and promotion of Fox Ridge State Park.

Southeastern Illinois Community Foundation
300 E. Washington St.
P.O. Box 1211
Effingham, IL 62401
217-342-4988
www.enrichingourcommunity.org
Mission: Provide leadership and management support to our member foundations.

SCORE
http://www.eiu.edu/~score/about.html
Mission: To provide professional guidance and information accessible to all to maximize the success of America's existing and emerging small businesses.
Mentoring in schools
To find out about a variety of school mentoring opportunities, contact your local school.

Camp New Hope
P.O. Box 764, Mattoon, Illinois 61938
(217) 895-2341
E-mail address: cnhinc@rr1.net
http://www.myfavoritecamp.org/
The mission of Camp New Hope is to provide affordable quality programs, exceptional services in a caring environment, and new hope for people who have developmental disabilities while providing parent and family support.

Teen Reach of Charleston
513 Seventh St.
Charleston, IL
Phone: 217-345-8005
Mission: To expand the range of choices and opportunities that enable, empower and encourage our youth to achieve positive growth and development, improve expectations and capacities for future success, and avoid or reduce risky behavior.

Nursing homes
For a listing of area nursing homes, look at your local phone book.

Mattoon Area PADS
2017 Broadway Ave
Mattoon, IL 61938
Phone: 217-234-7237
Mission: A local homeless shelter that provides emergency food and housing to any individuals or families that are in need.

Food banks
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Relay for Life
www.relayforlife.org

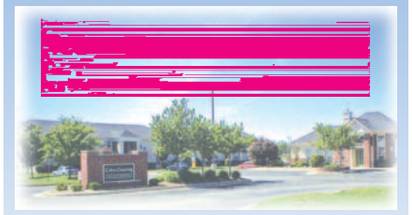
Special Olympics Family Festival
www.lakeland.cc.il.us/special_olympics/

Lincoln-Sargent Foundation
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217.345.1845
e-mail: HPA.LincolnLog@Illinois.gov
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Any employer sponsored/employee driven program

If you would like to learn more, always feel free to pick up the phone and call your local nonprofit. If you would like to see the financial reports of any nonprofit, you can find all 990 reports online at www.guidestar.org.

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Investing time in your local nonprofits

By Carl Walworth

In Illinois just last year, 3.9 million people volunteered an estimated 700 million hours of service. The estimated value of that service exceeds $15.5 billion, data compiled by the Donors Forum Illinois Nonprofit Economy Report shows.

Coles County and the surrounding area benefits greatly from its portion of that $15.5 billion value. Examples of the value are clear in places like local food pantries, youth league ball fields, social service agencies like Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army, and one-on-one meetings involving literacy coaching.

A recent 90 minute roundtable discussion included six local people with experience in volunteering and/or the local nonprofit sector. Their experiences represent a few examples of how our region greatly benefits from caring, time-giving folks.

A few of the themes that emerged from the facilitated roundtable discussion included:

- No special skills are required to help local nonprofits or other service agencies.
- Volunteers can get started without making a major time commitment.
- In most cases, there is an existing agency whose needs match the interests of most any individual.
- You don't have to volunteer in an area related to your work.
- And, most nonprofits are looking to make experiences of volunteers both rewarding and fun.

Annie Hernandez of the Lumpkin Family Foundation facilitated the discussion designed to create awareness and excitement around volunteering for a cause important to you. The following highlights of the conversation are paraphrased responses from the six individuals. Please note that some of the responses don't exactly follow the questions, but all responses pertain to volunteerism.



Nancy Elder

The participants were:

Nancy Elder is a 43-year resident of Sullivan. She and her husband owned and operated a ladies and children's clothing store for 15 years. Elder has volunteered with establishing the Sullivan Community Education Foundation; chairperson of the Moultrie County Mental Health Board; raised money for Fields-Wright medical facility; served on the committee to help establish Tabor Park; helped organize the first Festival of Stars; served on the zoning board of appeals for the city of Sullivan; served on the retail committee that organized the fall festival; represented her church as team leader for the cancer drive; delivered meals on wheels of shut-ins for the Moultrie County Retired Seniors program; served on the corporate board of the Sullivan preschool and is a volunteer counselor for SCORE.



Jason Tucker

Jason Tucker is a credit analyst with First Mid-Illinois Bank & Trust. He has worked at First Mid since 1994 and has been actively involved in the lending function. He is no stranger to investing time in the community, having spent the past 13 years serving on different boards/committees, which taught him the importance of volunteering in our community.



Rachel Fisher

Rachel Fisher is interim director of EIU's student community service office. The office was created in August 2008 by President Bill Perry with the purpose of connecting and engaging EIU students and community in service and volunteering.



Toq Lawrence

Toq Lawrence has been executive director of Mid-Illinois Big Brothers/Big Sisters for 34 years. She is an active member of Citizens Against Child Abuse, Coles County Interagency Council, child and adolescent local area network, Immaculate Conception Church and a lifelong resident of Mattoon.



Jill Wetzel

Jill Wetzel, a Mattoon native, is a former Key Club president at Mattoon High School. She also was a member of the National Honor Society, teen court. She plans to carry on her service work in college through Circle K and hopes to work on a mission staff next summer.



Carol Batterham

Carol Batterham is a retired associate librarian at Millikin University. She was a founding member of the Friends of the Library in Mattoon and the literary club. She is active in Delta Theta Tau, PEO, and with church and friends.

What has been your personal best experience in investing time in the community? Why? How did it make you feel?

Jason Tucker: Seeing campers at Camp New Hope, you can see how the money is being spent. And hearing stories about experiences between big brothers and big sisters. It feels good to help the cause.

Nancy Elder: Delivering meals to shut-ins. It's more than bringing a meal, we may be the only person they see all day.

Rachel Fisher: I get to be a matchmaker between 12,000 students and a fabulous community. I love seeing the smiles of the students making a difference. When I can match a student's interest with an opportunity where they feel like they are making a difference, it takes my breath away!

Toq Lawrence: The most rewarding experience is having men and women who participated in our program when they were younger come back or see me and tell me what a difference their mentor made in their life. This is what has kept me going over the years.

What ways/opportunities do you see for people to invest time in the Coles County and surrounding area?

Carol Batterham: I would recommend joining a sorority or service group like Delta Theta Tau, PEO does a lot of good, Rotary, Kiwanis, or Exchange Club. There are a lot of good organizations!

Fisher: It's finding like-minded people. You get people thinking about what they're interested in, and then find a group that matches. If there are no matches, you can start something new. It's not limited.

Lawrence: Pick up the phone and call any organization you have an interest in. Do something small…and see if you like it. You can always build up to a larger commitment like board service.

Why is it important for people to invest time in our community?

Wetzel: Getting started is one of the big struggles, so I've found it a big success when someone comes to a meeting. Once they get out and see how rewarding it is, they want to come back.

Batterham: Fellowship is an important part of it, too, particularly if you are new in town. When we (Carol and her husband Ron) first moved to town, I joined everything that asked me…and then figured out what was the best fit.

Tucker: Creating awareness is a big part of it. A lot of people don't know what to do. You have to find ways to get the word out.



Lawrence: We put together a brochure on how to be a community leader with Mid-Illinois Big Brothers/Big Sisters, that has really been helpful. The Leadership Coles County Alumni had a meeting at Rural King on how to get to know your non-profits. Those kinds of things are important to show what's out there and why it's important.

What is one thing you wish more people understood about investing time in the community or with a non-profit?

Lawrence: Sometimes people just don't think about it. People have busy lives and we need to make it easy to get involved.

Elder: People have this image that when they retire they are going to sit back and relax. (Batterham: It lasts about two weeks.) So put a bug in our ear and we will come and help when we are ready.

Lawrence: You have to be pro-active in a nice way, call people to have lunch and explain how they could be involved. Youth and most adults enjoy seeing themselves as helping younger kids, being a role model.

Wetzel: One of the things you get with youth is volunteering looks good on a college application…or it may even be required by the school. If you can get them started, they'll usually come back. If they get in the habit of doing it, then it becomes part of life.

Fisher: Entering college freshmen have such a high degree of wanting to be engaged. Surveys show as seniors they dropped that after getting on campus in part because they didn't know where to do it. We keep having blitzes to show different tastes of what's out there. And it's important not to make assumptions they want to do something in their major. Sometimes they want to do something because it's different. They want a chance to dabble in that.

Wetzel: You make so many friends and you feel good at the end of the day. At the end of the day, their life (those who received the service) is better because of what you do.

Fisher: Sometimes students say they're going to take this idea home with them. I'll ask, "to the residence hall?" They say, "no, Chicago." I tell them this is your home. Do something while you're here. Volunteering lets you take side streets and do things where you can say "that was really neat."

Tucker: If you look at the past, without volunteers Mattoon wouldn't be what it is today. So you're a piece of the future if you volunteer.

Lawrence: Volunteers live longer. You are a happier, more well adjusted person and you live a longer, more meaningful life.

Fisher: Age does NOT define skill. The inter-generational moments are exciting for us. Volunteers learn about themselves and learn about each other.

Elder: It gives added meaning to your life.

Wetzel: We went on a mission trip to Kentucky. We built a wheelchair ramp for this family. It wasn't people who had a lot of experience, and we couldn't use nail guns. You learned that you could do it, and you knew that you were in the right place at the right time.

Batterham: When you actually see the change … it's rewarding. Staying active and volunteering is good not only for physical health but also mental health.

Fisher: The No. 1 reason people volunteer is it feels good.

Lawrence: Most of the non-profits in Coles County have no idea how unique we really are in collaboration and engagement we have for each other.

Elder: Non-profits need not only helping hands, they need ideas. People from out of town have good ideas, too, so look around.

Batterham: I tell the Friends that when they go to another town, stop by the library.

Wetzel: It can change your life and other people's lives.

Tucker: For people to realize it doesn't take as much time as you think. It would be nice to see more people involved; good things happen the more people are engaged.

Lawrence: Everyone volunteering in some way. I've had people say they thought you need a degree in psychology to be a big brother or sister, or that you need to be a carpenter to volunteer for Habitat for Humanity. This is NOT the case.

What is your wish for the future of volunteerism for our community?

Tucker: It would be great to have a waiting list of people who want to volunteer.

Fisher: I'd love to see a thriving community where volunteerism is just a given, like mowing your lawn. People pick up the phone and ask to volunteer. A small contribution and one person truly make a difference.

Elder: A lot of people don't want to be leaders, they want to be followers. That's okay and volunteering offers lots of opportunities to do just that.

Lawrence: Volunteerism is a key part of the social fabric. I tell board members your job doesn't end when you walk out of a board meeting. Go tell people we need this, this and this. Don't segment the volunteer part of your life from when you're golfing or playing cards.

Wetzel: One of the biggest things about volunteering is stepping out of your comfort zone. I never thought I could build a wheelchair ramp. We all have to work together to better the community. It's not a one man show, it is about everyone coming together and making a community a better place.

Elder: Everyone experiences the self fulfillment a person receives from volunteering.

SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Volunteering or giving of your time to help the community can be rewarding. Many efforts in our community would not have happended without the investment of time from so many of our community members. In this economic time of need, this is definitely still the case.

There are a variety of ways to invest time…from volunteering once a year at the Rotary canned food drive, to serving meals or working the front desk at PADS once a month, to spending time as a mentor on a weekly basis, to serving on a board of directors. Nonprofits reply on volunteers to provide the services to the most vulnerable in our community. What are you passionate about and want

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B2B show this October

By ROB STROUD
Staff Writer

EFFINGHAM -- The Greater Effingham Chamber of Commerce has relaunched its trade show program with an aim of bringing businesses together to meet with other businesses from throughout the region.

The chamber's Crossroads Regional B2B Marketplace trade show has been scheduled for 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Oct. 1 at the Thelma Keller Convention Center in Effingham. The goal is for service and product suppliers to be able to talk directly with potential business clients during the show.

Effingham chamber President Norma Lansing said this will be the first trade show that the chamber has held in five years, adding that past shows were more Effingham centered.

Promoting the economic benefits of chamber members doing businesses with fellow member is a big part of the chamber's mission, Lansing said. Broadening the exposure of member businesses to a wider region is a natural extension of this mission, she said.

Lansing said the show will draw participants from Champaign, Decatur, Springfield and other towns with a radius of 50 to 75 miles or more of Effingham. She said participants will feature electronics, cell phones, marketing services, print materials and many other goods and services.

"There are going to be a lot of educational opportunities. A lot of opportunities to learn about business services and products in the region," Lansing said.

The B2B Marketplace is scheduled to kick off at 10 a.m. Oct. 1 with a keynote presentation by University of Illinois-Springfield professor Richard Judd, who will discuss business opportunities and trends in today's economy. He also will give a presentation at 1 p.m. on business strategy, tactics and execution.

Judd has chaired the business administration department at U of I-Springfield and published numerous articles for educating small business operators.

Lansing said education and government resources will be featured in the the trade show's "Knowledge Center," with booths and more educational opportunities designed to help improve business operations. Businesses can sign up to give seminars as part of the "Knowledge Center" or the rest of the B2B Marketplace.

In addition, the trade show's "Virtual Marketplace" is scheduled to spotlight participants to potential customers around the globe online at www.crossroadsb2b.net. The "Virtual Marketplace" is slated to operate from August 1 to Feb. 28.

"Our exhibitors will have exposure well beyond the time of the one-day event," Lansing said.

Corporate sponsors for the B2B Marketplace include Imagine This! Marketing Group, Effingham Daily News, Premier Broadcasting Company, The Cromwell Radio Group, Patton Printing, Wortman Printing, and the Journal-Gazette & Times-Courier. Additional sponsorship opportunities are available.

For more information on the B2B Marketplace, contact Lansing at 342-4147 or go online to www.crossroadsb2b.net.

Contact Rob Stroud at rstroud@jg-tc.com or 238-6861.

Crossroads Regional B2B Marketplace schedule
Oct. 1, Thelma Keller Convention Center
10-11 a.m., keynote address by U of I-Springfield business professor Richard Judd, Hilton Garden Inn ballroom
11 a.m.-8 p.m., Marketplace opens
5-8 p.m., Chamber Business After Hours in the exhibit hall

Development center office open at chamber office

MATTOON – The Illinois Eastern Community College small business development center satellite office is open at the Mattoon Chamber of Commerce each Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Under the direction of program director Barney Brumfiel of IECC/SBDC, participants receive free private business counseling and business development services for both members and non-chamber members.

The Illinois Entrepreneurship Network Small Business Development Center provides advocacy, business assistance, training, information, access to critical resources and guidance to help pre-venture entrepreneurs and existing small companies grow their businesses in today's competitive economy.

The programs are funded in partnership with the Small Business Administration, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and local host institutions.

In 2008, the SBDC location in U.S. Rep. Tim Johnson's district counseled 2,441 clients, helped create or retain 803 jobs, helped start 28 businesses, helped secure $27.6 million in financing, helped nine businesses expand and helped generate $48.5 million in export sales.

To book a free confidential session, contact the Mattoon chamber at 235-5661.

Funding forum planned

MATTOON – The Lake Land College Workforce Development Center will host a community funding forum on Sept. 8 at the workforce development center, 305 Richmond Ave.

The agenda includes sessions on financing community projects and agency program offerings and areas of assistance.

The financing session includes topics of how grants work with examples from Doug McDermand, executive director of the Coles County Regional Planning and Development Commission.

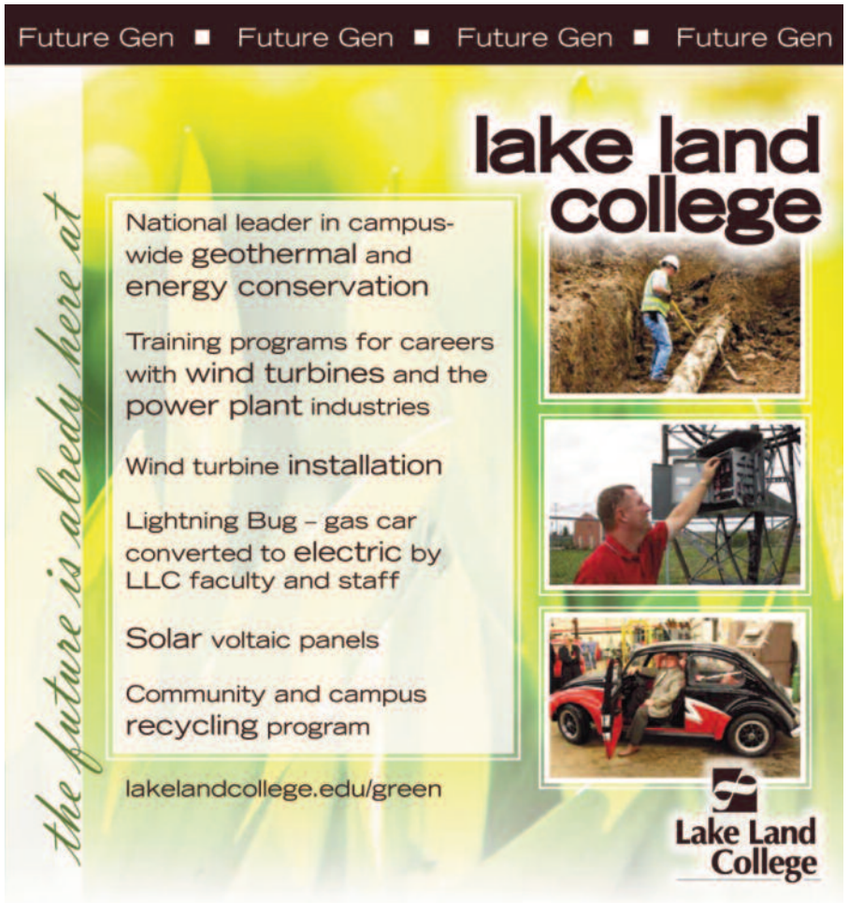
The program begins with time for networking and hor d'oeuvres from 5:30 to 6 p.m. The financing projects session begins at 6 p.m. with the agency program session set for 6:45 p.m. The fee for the forum is $15.

The forum is designed to aid communities in finding the resources available to assist in funding and development of projects. Individuals or groups with interests in municipal government, education, economic development, local planning, parks and recreation, or business and industry are encouraged to attend. The forum is an opportunity to interact with a variety of agency representatives and discuss how financing options and unique partnerships can be formed to address a community's needs.

Agencies to be represented at the forum include the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, USDA Rural Development, Coles County Regional Planning and Development Commission, the Illinois Treasurer's office, Resource Conservation and Development, Rural Partners, the Economic Development Group, Ltd., the Illinois Finance Authority and the Business Solutions Center.

For more information, call or email Trisha Mason at 540-3517 pr ecidc@lakeland.cc.il.us.







Igniting entrepreneurial growth at the Prairie Spark Regional Investment Forum

How are you investing your money in these uncertain times? The Business Solutions Center at Eastern Illinois University (BSC) would like you to consider investing in local expanding businesses or new ventures that need help getting started in their business. They will be hosting the first Prairie Spark Investment Forum on Thursday, September 3rd at 7:30 am at the Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center in Mattoon. The goal is to link regional investable dollars to entrepreneurial ideas thereby spurring economic vitality in the region.

Two to four businesses or start-up ventures will be presenting 20 minute business pitches to interested individuals, angel investors and venture capitalists in the room. The plans will be screened prior to the presentation by the BSC staff, so the most viable projects will be presented. The floor will be open for questions and then individuals can get together after the presentations with the business owners to directly discuss potential funding opportunities.

"Silicon Valley became a leading region in innovation, because they built the infrastructure to match business concepts with financial capital. Prairie Spark Investment Forum will provide that same foundation for matching entrepreneurial ideas with the investable dollars", stated Bob Schultz, of Schultz Investment Company and BSC advisory board member. "Our regional entrepreneurs have shown a capacity for developing firms that benefit the area, the nation and the world. Their innovations are the seeds for future jobs and opportunity."

This initiative was born out of the initial strategic planning of the Business Solutions Center in 2006, and echoed at an ECIDC sponsored East Central Open Retreat at Allerton Park last fall. A forum was held in January 2009 at the Mattoon Country Club on that discussed ways of increasing local investment dollars to regional companies and start-ups. It was reported from the Millikin University's study, Accelerating Entrepreneurship in Central Illinois: A Catalyst for Regional Opportunity, that only one-third of the patents assigned to Central Illinois are commercialized in the region.

Although some clients are identified to present at the forum, there is still room for one or two others businesses or inventors to pitch their plan. Contact Jeanne Dau, Director of the BSC, at 217-581-2913 or email at jcdau@eiu.edu if you are interested in attending the forum on September 3rd or if your business would like to present your ideas to local investors.



Panelists discuss Angel investing and venture capital at an informational forum last January. (foreground to background) Dr. Chuck Chayadi of EIU's School of Business, Paul McKillip of Lorenz Supply Company, Jason Wrone of Open Prairie Ventures, Tim Hoerr from iCyt Mission Technologies and Trisha Mason of East Centrai Illinois Development Corp.

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Service a key to gaining local customers

By ROB STROUD
Staff Writer



Fastenal employee Scott Easterday, right, helps customers Rick Sappington, left, and Kyle Worthy, center, with D & M Electrical of Neoga, Ill., at Fastenal in Mattoon, Ill., on Friday, June 26, 2009. (Journal Gazette/ Times-Courier, Kevin Kilhoffer)

Some of a business's best repeat customers, and goods/services suppliers, can be fellow members of its local business community.

Kurt Kirchner, president of the Kansas-based Kirchner Building Center company, estimated that 50 percent of the company's sales go to area contractors and manufacturers. He said his centers provide their business neighbors with quick turnaround time on acquiring building products and services.

"We try to be there even after the sale," Kirchner said, adding customer relationships are very important to the company.

In turn, Kirchner said the the company purchases fuel and other supplies whenever possible from local businesses, such as County Office Products in Charleston. He said it is particularly convenient for the company to acquire insulation for sale at its building centers directly from the Dow Chemical plant in Charleston

Cindy Titus, executive director of the Charleston Area Chamber of Commerce, said one of the main benefits of area businesses serving each other is that they can save on shipping and transportation costs. She said it is good for area businesses economically to support each other.

John Vandeveer, general manager for Fastenal's Mattoon location, said the shop serves Curry Construction, Justrite Manufacturing Co., R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co. and other area businesses.

The Fastenal company provides anchors, nuts and bolts, nails, rivets and other fasteners as well as a wide range of other industrial and construction supplies. Vandeveer said Fastenal has a manufacturing facility in Indianapolis, but the Mattoon shop keeps metal on hand to fabricate items to meet customers' needs.

"If we don't have it, we will make it," Vandeveer said, adding the shop provides product pickups and deliveries.

Tom Porter, co-owner of Porter Auto Body in Charleston and Mattoon, said his body shops and other local automotive-related businesses network, make customer referrals back and forth, and utilize each other's goods and services.

"There is a pretty good circle there," Porter said, adding businesses in the automotive field probably have closer ties than those in other fields.

Porter said his body shops work closely with dealership, engine, oil and lube, and tire businesses in both Charleston and Mattoon. He said his shops also work with many nonautomotive businesses, including repairing vehicles from Arends Brothers in Ashmore, Ameren CIPS, and Consolidated Communications.

Good service has been key to building relationships with businesses and other customers, Porter said. He noted that his body shops offer pickup, delivery and shuttle services for customers, as well as car rentals for business clients.

Quality of service was mentioned repeatedly by businesses asked about catering to fellow members of their local business community.

"We thrive on service," said Earl Walden, owner of Walden's TV & Appliances in Mattoon. "I would not want to operate without it. I think it's very important for a local business. You can't get along without it."

Walden, who has been in business for 49 years, said he has staff ready to make installation, repair and service visits to his customers, which include stores, offices, and rental housing. He added the phone lines at his shop are answered by employees, not the automated phone lines that frustrate customers at some large businesses.

Both Walden and Janice Moritz, owner of Warner's Office Equipment & Gifts in Mattoon, said personalized service is essential to competing with "big box" stores.

"We don't just point someone to where something is in the store. We provide individual service," Moritz said. "We like to know our customers on a personal basis and we always like new customers too."

Moritz said Warner's, which has been in business since 1937, provides engraving and gift wrapping services as well as deliveries in Mattoon. She said the store also carries typewriters and their ribbons, ledgers books, and other office supplies that can be difficult for small, local businesses to find in the mass market, digital age.

"Not everyone is computer savvy," Moritz said.

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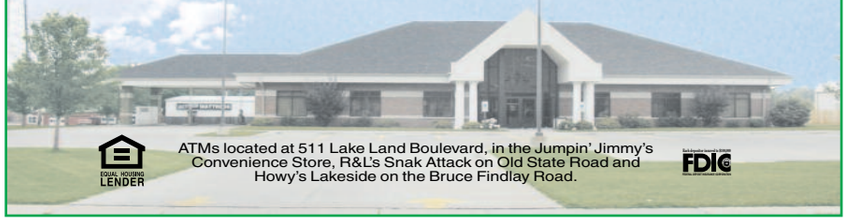
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Summer high school camp energizes emerging entrepreneurs

"If you had $50,000 what business would you start to make your community a better place?" That was the question posed to teens age 14-18 this June at Camp e3, held in Effingham and as an overnight camp at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston. This experiential camp was developed by the Business Solutions Center at Eastern Illinois University, a public/private partnership established in 2008 to plant the seeds of entrepreneurship by providing youth programs and free and confidential counseling to new and existing businesses in the region.

"Our goal is to inspire creative thinking and problem solving. We want campers to know at the end of this camp that becoming an entreprenuer is hard work, but definitely a viable career option for them to consider," said Jeanne Dau, Director at the Business Solutions Center.

Successful entrepreneurs spoke to students about what is needed to succeed and grow a business. Vital topics include creativity, concept development, marketing and advertising, business budgeting, operations and building your team. With the assistance of EIU business students, a group of four teens created a business from scratch and presented the business to a panel of local entrepreneurs serving as judges.

The winning business pitches reflected popular trends apparent in our everyday lives. Green-ham, the Effingham winner, proposed a recycling business for that town and Fields of Grain, the EIU winner proposed a healthfood restaurant and retail store.Both teams received $400 in cash for their ideas.

Jack Schultz, CEO of Agracel and guest speaker of both camps, stated,



"The millenial generation, aged 12 to 27, is going to be the most entrepeneurial generation in the history of the United States. Camp e3 is the best way to start the entrepreneurial juices flowing for this young generation."

Midland States Bank and First Mid-Illinois Bank and Trust were the corporate sponsors, but the camp would not have been made possible without the support and guidance of the 36 Business Solutions Center partners.



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Green-Ham aids recycling

Recycling is one of the easiest ways to preserve the environment. The main reason we recycle is that it reduces wastes. The average American discards seven and a half pounds of garbage every day; if some of this garbage was recycled, our landfills would not be as full and we would not have to use as many of our natural resources.

Our business is called Green-Ham. We are called Green-Ham because we are working toward getting the city of Effingham to become "green." We collect recyclables such as paper, plastic, and aluminum from houses in Effingham once a week, and bring them to Davis

Effingham's winning project idea

Recycling for our customers. This will help the community because they will save time by not having to bring their recyclables to Davis Recycling themselves, as our truck will take care of the transportation. As research shows, 77% of people have said that they don't recycle because it's too time-consuming. This will also make more people want to recycle because it will become much easier for them to do so; just toss the recyclables into the provided bin and you're done!

They will have a choice of having up to three bins to recycle in. We will have a flat fee of $25 for the first month. After the first month, the fee will be $15.

There are 5,330 houses in the city of Effingham. Applying the research, this means that over 4,000 people in Effingham would recycle if they could. Assuming this, we would hope to get pproximately 500 customers in the first month. After the first month, our gross revenue would be $12,500. During the second month we would hope to get 50 new members, while keeping the 500 we already had. After this we would hope to receive 30 new members each month for the rest of the year. We would break even after about seven months and have about a $30,000 profit after just the first year.

This business would become very successful because our company would the only business around our area that offers services like ours. The only other business that collects is out of Charleston, and since that's about 45 miles away we're confident that Effingham residents will invest in their hometown company. After we've been in the business for a while, we plan to move onto collecting recyclables in the commercial field, and also into the surrounding areas such as Neoga, Altamont, and T-Town. We hope that our company will make the world just a little better of a place, just by making it easier for people to recycle.



Green Ham from Effingham are wearing the green t-shirts Front row: Aaron Wall, Christopher Schultz, Elizabeth Jansen, Back row: Allison Donsbach and Chris Lidy.

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Fields of Grain provides healthy foods

The nature of our business, Fields of Grain, is providing healthy food for people who want to improve their lifestyle and make it more healthful.

The owners of our business would be Cody Locke who will be managing our restaurant and store, Ryan Dau who will be stocking the shelves of our store, Thorin Blitz who will be taking care of the store and restaurant's janitorial needs, and Lexy Zuniga who will be the chef of the restaurant. The name of our business will be Fields of Grain.

EIU's winning project idea

Our customers will be whomever wants to have a healthier lifestyle especially aging baby boomers who find themselves with more time on their hands and burgeoning health problems.

Our location will be between Mattoon/Charleston area off of Route 16. Our restaurant needs will require a culinary degree, commercial loan, sales experience, and people skills. We will be selling various types of delicious healthy foods and the prices for a meal would range anywhere from around $8.00 to $15.00 each.

We would need to secure our loan, begin the construction phase for our building, and start our business up by the end of 2009. We will know when we have been successful whenever we have seen a decrease in diet related illnesses in East Central Illinois.



The winning team at EIU (the yellow team) is Fields of Grain. From left: Cody Locke, Lexi Zuniga, Thorin Blitz and Ryan Dau.

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Sstudents working on projects at Camp e3.

e3 Schedule

Day One – June 14, 2009

Time	Activity	.Location	Speaker
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration	Thomas Hall	
5:00 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.	Welcome	Thomas Hall	Jeanne Dau
5:15 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Cookout/ Speaker	Lumpkin Hall Patio	David Orr
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Personality Assessment	Lumpkin Hall Patio	Susan Hanfland
8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Building Your Team	Lumpkin Hall Patio	Frank Brummer
9:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.	Movie	Thomas Hall	N/A
11:00 p.m.	Lights Out	Thomas Hall	N/A

Day Two – June 15, 2009

7:15 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Dining Hall	N/A
8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Team Formation	Lumpkin Hall	Group Leaders
8:30 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	Creativity & Innovation	Lumpkin Hall	Jon Perles
9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Junk Table	Lumpkin Hall	Christie and Cheryl
10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	Break	Lumpkin Hall	N/A
10:15 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Brainstorm Ideas/Feasibility	Lumpkin Hall	Group Leaders
11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	Concept Development	Lumpkin Hall	Jeanne Dau
11:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Break	Lumpkin Hall	N/A
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch/Guest Speaker	Lumpkin Hall	Julie Nimmons
1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Business Budgeting	Lumpkin Hall	Beth Glanzer
2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Group Work on Budgeting	Lumpkin Hall	Group Leaders
3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Break/Team Activity	Lumpkin Hall	Group Leaders
3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	Marketing and Advertising	Lumpkin Hall	
4:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Group Work on Marketing	Lumpkin Hall	Group Leaders
5:00 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.	Break	Thomas Hall	N/A
6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.	Putt Putt/Dinner CEO Class	Lincoln Springs	CEO Alum
9:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	Break	Thomas Hall	N/A
11:00 p.m.	Lights Out	Thomas Hall	N/A

Day Three – June 16, 2009

7:15 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Dining Hall	N/A
8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Shoe Activity	Lumpkin Hall	Group Leaders
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Operations Speaker	Lumpkin Hall	Darrin Bowers
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Lean Manufacturing	Lumpkin Hall	Evan Kubicek
10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.	Break	Lumpkin Hall	N/A
10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	Social Media Speaker	Lumpkin Hall	Antoine Thomas
11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch/Guest Speaker	Lumpkin Hall	Jack Schultz
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Group Work	Lumpkin Hall	Group Leaders
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Mark Rubel Doudna	Doudna Hall	Mark Rubel
3:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Group Work	Lumpkin Hall	Group Leaders
3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Break	Lumpkin Hall	N/A
4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Doudna Commercials	Doudna Hall	Group Leaders
5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Dinner	Thomas Hall	N/A
6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	Break	Thomas Hall	N/A
7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Bowling	Union	N/A
11:00 p.m.	Lights Out	Thomas Hall	N/A

Day Four – June 17, 2009

7:15 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Dining Hall	N/A
8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Group Work	Lumpkin Hall	Group Leaders
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Pitch Presentations	Lumpkin Hall	Judges: Dan Downs, Brian Titus, Ann Beck
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch/Judging/ Movie	Lumpkin Hall	Judges
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Team Awards	Lumpkin Hall	Judges



Frank Brummer gives a presentation on team building at Camp e3.

SCORE can help

SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business" is a nonprofit association dedicated to entrepreneur education and the formation, growth and success of small businesses nationwide.

Nationally, SCORE was founded in 1964.

Locally, a SCORE chapter opened in 2005 through efforts of the Charleston Area Chamber of Commerce and the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences at Eastern Illinois University. The local chapter is growing in the southeast Illinois region, with plans to build on the 250 or so clients that have been served since 2005.

The local SCORE chapter served about 50 clients in the past year, helping businesses deal with a variety of issues. Some clients are looking to start a business, others are working on plans to grow, and others are looking for ways to help weather the economic downturn.

SCORE offers free, confidential counseling and advice from trained volunteers with experience in business. SCORE counseling is for both new and established businesses.

Those who seek counseling for an existing business may have an issue or issues in areas like management, marketing, accounting.

SCORE is a resource partner with the Small Business Administration and operates nearly 400 chapters across the country.

To contact SCORE, call 581-3522 or email score4u@eiu.edu.

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