

A monthly publication of the RiverBend Growth Association...
Your Regional Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Agency



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Under the Sea at Business After Hours

For the seventh year in a row, **1st MidAmerica Credit Union and the Wood River Aquatic Center** hosted the August Business After Hours networking event at the Wood River Round House. This year several RBGA members partnered with them to showcase their businesses: **Bella Milano, Cope Plastics, Fritz Distributing, Jack Schmitt Chevrolet of Wood River and Sweet Sisters Cakes and Confections.**

In addition to the monthly

networking opportunities and the refreshments, these hosts take it a step further and add an "entertainment" piece that included a three step competition - costume and two water activities. Three teams competed for the traveling trophy: 1st MidAmerica Credit Union and two teams from the Wood River Aquatic Center, with one of the Aquatic Center teams taking the win.

Attendees enjoyed delicious food and beverages from Bella Milano, Robert "Chick"

Fritz Distributing and Sweet Sisters Cakes and Confections. Generous door prizes were given away, all compliments of the hosts.

Business After Hours networking events are held monthly from 5-7pm and the locations vary each month. All attendees experience endless networking opportunities, delicious food and beverages and information about the hosts and RBGA.



August 2015 BAH Hosts: Alan Meyer of 1st MidAmerica Credit Union, Jason Woody of the Wood River Parks and Recreation Department, Donna Oehler and Joan Brown of Sweet Sisters Cakes and Confections. Not pictured are Bella Milano, Cope Plastics, Fritz Distributing and Jack Schmitt Wood River Chevrolet.



Amelia and Mike from 1st MidAmerica Credit Union, Lexi and Morgan (the Titanic and the iceberg from the movie The Titanic) and Tyler and Andra (Jack Dawson and Rose from the movie The Titanic), both representing the City of Wood River.



Judges were Cheryl Maguire and Scott Miner of the City of Wood River and Karen Wilson of State Farm Insurance.



"Jack Dawson" of the City of Wood River does a flip off the diving board for one of the competitions.



1st Place winners are "Jack Dawson and Rose," representing the City of Wood River.



Bill Drake of 1st MidAmerica Credit Union is one of the door prize winners, compliments of Sweet Sisters Cakes and Confections.

Olive Oil Marketplace named August 2015 Small Business of the Month

Congratulations to Olive Oil Marketplace owners Tim and Julie Meeks on being selected the August 2015 Small Business of the Month.

Olive Oil Marketplace, located at 108 W. Third Street in downtown Alton, is a family owned and operated gourmet retail shop focusing on 100% Extra Virgin Olive Oils from top olive farms worldwide. To complement the oils, they stock more than 25 flavored balsamic vinegars imported from Modena, Italy.

In addition to the oils and the balsamics, they offer a variety of handmade

flavored pastas, seasonings and rubs, gourmet flavored coffee, loose teas, bakeware, kitchen and grilling gadgets and unique gift giving products.

Remember to visit Olive Oil Marketplace when you need that unique gift. They offer gift certificates, custom made gift baskets and personalized bottling.

For more information on Olive Oil Marketplace visit oliveoilmarketplace.com or call 618-304-3769.



Several Riverbend leaders joined Olive Oil Marketplace owners and staff to celebrate: RBGA President Monica Bristow, Stephanie Tate of the Alton CVB, Karen McAtee of Village of Godfrey, Amy Schaake of Edwardsville Intelligencer, Cara Pascal of Options Now, Martha Schultz of First Clover Leaf Bank, Nancy Bivens of WBGZ, Tom Hoechst of CNB Bank & Trust and Pat Schwarte of Riverbender.com.

Employment Opportunities

The RBGA has recently added a section to our website with Employment Opportunities. It's located at <http://www.growthassociation.com/page/employment-opportunities/>. It can also be accessed from the header of any page throughout the site.

Members can post their job openings on this page. Here's the link: <http://www.growthassociation.com/page/create-employment-ad/>

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Illinois Lieutenant Governor Visits Riverbend

The RiverBend Growth Association and Lewis & Clark Community College sponsored a breakfast where Illinois Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti discussed her state duties and sought input on her role as Chair of the Rivers Coordinating Council, Chair of the Local Government Consolidation and Unfunded Mandates Taskforce, Chair of the Governor's Rural Affairs Council and Chair of the Interagency Military Base Support and Economic Development Committee.

Evelyn is proud to serve the residents of the State of Illinois as their 47th Lieutenant Governor and the first Latina Lieutenant Governor in the entire country. She is a working mother of three and an attorney by trade. She was formerly an adjunct professor of law and a Wheaton City Councilwoman. Following

graduation, Evelyn moved to Chicago to attend The John Marshall Law School where she developed an understanding and passion for the law and for Illinois. Evelyn soon joined Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan's office as an Assistant Attorney General where she fought to protect the people of the State of Illinois. In 2010, Evelyn suffered an accident while walking on Wheaton city property. Subsequent medical examinations revealed that she has Multiple Sclerosis. Evelyn vowed to never let her MS stop her. She proceeded to run for, and win, an election to the Wheaton City Council on a platform of delivering efficient, streamlined government. As Lt. Governor of Illinois, Evelyn is committed to fighting for all Illinois residents. She applies the same passion to her new role that has propelled her



Pictured here, Lt. Governor Sanguinetti addressed the audience.

throughout her life, from humble beginnings in Hialeah, FL to becoming Illinois' first Latina Lieutenant Governor.

The audience of more than 70 enjoyed a wonderful buffet breakfast by LCCC's Chef Gabe, and then many toured the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center with the Lt. Governor.

Journey opens at Argosy Casino Alton

The RiverBend Growth Association recently participated in the ribbon cutting and grand opening of Journey, the fine dining option at Argosy Casino Alton. The restaurant has a breathtaking view of the Clark Bridge, the Mighty Mississippi and spectacular sunsets. It is located in the old Outfitter restaurant quarters. The restaurant features a beautiful wood appearance throughout the restaurant. The menu includes delicious steak and seafood entrée options, a wonderful appetizer menu and a wide choice of delicious side items.

The menu is diverse and includes handmade desserts



General manager Phillipe Khouri, RBGA President Monica Bristow, Greg Caffey from the City of Alton and Representative Dan Beiser helped cut the ribbon along with staff and patrons at a special event on Wednesday, July 29 at Journey.

created by the chefs, a nice wine list and craft and draft beers including locally brewed Templar and some IPAs.

Journey is open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday through Sunday to start and Jeff Ledford is executive chef.

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

Matt Kotzamanis

TheBANK of Edwardsville

Matthew Kotzamanis is the Retail Lending Officer at TheBANK of Edwardsville's Alton Center.



An employee of TheBANK since 2005, Matthew's job focuses on helping customers secure construction, auto, home and small business loans, as well as establishing lines of credit. He is also an active member of the RiverBend community as Secretary of the Bethalto Kiwanis Club, Treasurer of the RiverBend Rotary Club and a member of the Alton Area Business Development Association. He was honored in 2011 as one of the "20 Under 40" by the Telegraph and the RiverBend Growth Association for his contributions to the area.

A first generation American citizen with parents emigrating from Greece and Slovenia, Matthew grew up in the restaurant business, establishing a keen understanding of what it means to be a business owner as well as the value of hard work. He has carried the lessons learned from his upbringing into his adult professional life, citing the most rewarding part of his job as the opportunity to help others make their dreams come true. Matthew lives in Bethalto with his wife, Brandy, and has two children: Lacy, a 21-year-old senior at Oklahoma State University; and 8-year-old son, John. Matthew's hobbies include exercising, working on home improvements, and spending time with his family.

Therese Kuddes

Kuddes Advertising Specialties

I am **Therese Kuddes** and my husband, Kevin, and I own Kuddes Advertising Specialties and Bridge Coin. I have been selling advertising promotional items since 1983. Kuddes Advertising Specialties was started by Donald E. Kuddes in 1955 and has always been locally owned and operated.



I am active with the RiverBend Growth Association. I was born and raised in Louisville, KY, graduated from Mercy Academy High School and attended Western KY University. My husband and I have lived in Godfrey for more than 29 years and we are members of St. Ambrose Catholic Church. We have two sons, Ben, a Civil Engineer in Little Rock, AR; and Brian, a Marketing Representative for Federated Insurance working in Springfield, IL.

Matt Labertew

Axis Spinal Care

My name is **Dr. Matthew Labertew**. I am a native of the Bethalto area and graduated from Civic Memorial High School in 1993. After receiving treatment for a sports injury in high school, I decided to become a chiropractor to provide the same help and pain relief to athletes of all ages, their families and my community.



I've been in practice for 15 years, specializing in Chiropractic, Acupuncture and Nutrition. Patients and their families continue to return to me because I am their hometown chiropractor; I provide compassionate care and make it affordable for everyone. I have patients from 2 to 102 and accept most major insurances including Medicare. Call my office at (618)377-9920 to make an appointment or stop by. The office now has a full time licensed physical therapist and massage therapist. Walk-ins, emergent care and same day appointments are available for all patients, new or established. Thanks to the Riverbend Community I look forward to my next 15 years in Bethalto as your hometown chiropractor!



SNIP Alliance holds ribbon cutting

The volunteers of SNIP Alliance hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony to educate the community on their services.

SNIP Alliance is dedicated to reducing pet overpopulation; therefore, reducing the number of animals euthanized yearly at animal control facilities. SNIP Alliance provides education to the public on the benefits of spay-neuter, acting as a resource for those seeking low-cost spay-neuter services, and providing low-cost spay-

neuter clinics to the public.

For more information on SNIP Alliance, visit snipalliance.org.



Several community leaders supported SNIP Alliance President Sandra Eaves at the ribbon cutting ceremony on Tuesday, August 25, 2015: Angela Hills and Kara Buttry of Integrity Healthcare of Godfrey, Karen McAtee of the Village of Godfrey, Cathie Doria of the Edwardsville Intelligencer, Kathy Weaver of Investment Planners, Josh Ruyle and Lisa Smith of 1st MidAmerica Credit Union, Martha Schultz of First Clover Leaf Bank, Tom Hoechst of CNB Bank & Trust, Godfrey Mayor Mike McCormick, Jerry Gibson of Kiwanis, Dick Propes and Amy Schaake of the Edwardsville Intelligencer.

Networking Events that help develop your business

Networking events are an effective way to develop professional relationships with businesses/organizations within the Riverbend community. The RBGA hosts a monthly networking called the Breakfast Connections and/or the Total Networking Lunch. Attendees enjoy and benefit from top of the mind awareness participation activities, presentations focused on leadership, sales and motivation and opportunities to showcase themselves and their respective businesses/organizations.

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, September 9th for the Total Networking Luncheon event at Julia's Banquet Center in East Alton. The Total Networking Luncheon networking event will engage you with an interactive participation activity as well as plenty of time for one-on-one networking.



Josh Ruyle and Gary Hoggatt of 1st MidAmerica Credit Union, Laura Orban of Glenhaven Gardens and Dentist Rachelle Phillips of Innovative Dentistry



Denise Ukena of Community Hope Center, Kathy Lewis of Mustang Sanctuary, RBGA President Monica Bristow, Angie Holtkamp of State Farm Karen Wilson's office and Therese Kuddes of Kuddes Advertising Specialties



Amy Schaake of the Edwardsville Intelligencer, Jamie Ruyle of CJ Schlosser, Jeff Lauritzen of Country Financial, Lisa Shain of Shell Community Federal Credit Union and Tom Hoechst of CNB Bank & Trust

Welcome our newest members to the RiverBend Growth Association

1904 General Store

Christine Velloff Owner
322 E. Broadway
Alton IL 62002
(618) 433-8195



1904 General Store located at 322 E. Broadway, Alton, IL 62002 is a combination fudge, candy and unique gift store. The store is located in the historic "1904 World's Fair Building" featuring beautiful wood and architectural details. We have several flavors of fudge, chocolate bars, nuts and a variety of wrapped and bulk candy. Check out the nostalgic candy too! Not only do we have the candy shop but a one of a kind gift store. Some items are repurposed and handcrafted. Choose from a variety of seasonal gifts which are displayed on our old fashioned porch built from salvaged items. Make us a shopping destination as we have something for the whole family! Store hours are Wednesday thru Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday noon to 4 p.m. Our phone # is 433-8195.

Absolute Audiology

Aaron Gingrich Master H.I.D.
5520A Godfrey Road
Godfrey IL 62035
(618) 467-8889
112 S. State Street
Jerseyville IL 62052
(618) 639-3277
absoluteaudiology.com



For more than 15 years Aaron Gingrich has years been helping improve the quality of life for thousands of people

across Illinois. He is known for doing everything possible to provide a perfect transition to better hearing for his patients by evaluating their hearing deficit with the most state of the art testing and advanced assessment techniques. Offering the best hearing solutions in the business, Absolute Audiology evaluates your hearing loss, individual lifestyle, and unique requirements before suggesting the absolute best solution for your individual needs.

Maple Leaf Cottage Inn

Deborah Smith Owner
P.O. Box 156
12 Selma
Elsah IL 62028
(618) 374-1684
MapleLeafCottageInn.com



Nestled between the bluffs facing the Mississippi River is the historic Village of Elsay, IL. People refer to this quaint village as, "The town time forgot". A relaxing, peaceful and charming Bed and Breakfast awaits you. The Maple Leaf Cottage Inn (Est. 1949) offers its guests five comfortable and affordable rooms with many amenities. Trees, plants and flowers throughout the property. Please call for more information and allow us the privilege of reserving a room for your next getaway.

Midwest Business Institute, Inc.

Richard Avdoian Founder/CEO
217 South Main Street
Edwardsville IL 62025
(618) 972-8588
midwestbusinessinstitute.com



Midwest Business Institute believes every business can achieve increased productivity with the proper mix of coaching, employee training, and best practices. The faculty of MBI is national and local business, sales and marketing experts, committed to developing and presenting business and personal enrichment programs. Founded in 1996, MBI is known for innovative, customized solutions, and unparalleled commitment to our clients' successes. The skills obtained through our consulting and business coaching services, training programs, and conferences develop the essential leadership and management attributes that are vital to the success of business owners and executives. MBI also offers signature training such as the Midwest Speakers Academy, Trade Show Booth Camps, and Business Growth Forums. To learn more about MBI, contact us at 618-972-8588 or visit us online at www.midwestbusinessinstitute.com.

Movement Mortgage, LLC

Shannon Kinsey, Loan Officer
1000 Mid Rivers Mall Dr.
St. Charles MO 63376
(618) 494-8811
movement.com/lo/shannon-kinsey/

Ron's Auto Body

Ronnie Lawless Owner
825 E. Broadway
Alton IL 62002
(618) 462-6769

State Street Market

Terri Beaubien Owner
208 State Street
Alton IL 62002
(618) 462-8800



European-style bistro featuring fresh organic greens, sandwiches, paninis, house made soups; wine garden, featuring wine & Craft beers. Brunch menu on Saturday. Hours are Tue-Fri: 11:00 am - 2:00 pm; Sat: 9:00 am - 2:00 pm.

Marketing Opportunity you don't want to miss!

ARGOSY[®]

CASINO ♦ ALTON

If you are looking for a venue to market your products, services, employees and more, then consider participating in the annual women's seminar, *Bet On Yourself...Bet On A Winner*, by purchasing a sponsorship or admission tickets.

The women's seminar is a half day seminar on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 from 7:30am-1pm at the Atrium Hotel. The seminar has been sold out at 225 women for the past two years and it includes motivational and educational speakers:

Karen Wilson of State Farm, Richard Avdoian of Midwest Institute, Emily Hejna of the Alton Police Department and Jennifer Meckles of KSDK Channel 5 News. Along with the speaker presentations, the day includes attendance prizes, food

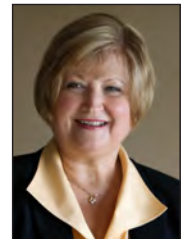
and beverages and unlimited networking opportunities.

This event sells out so don't wait to purchase your admission tickets. Single tickets are \$50 each and tables of 6 are \$275.

Bet On Yourself...Bet On A Winner Sponsorship Opportunities

- **Jokers Are Wild** (major prize sponsor): You provide 225 attendance gifts to attendees with your name/logo on item and the item will be displayed at 225 place settings. Suggested item is a rhinestone encrusted purse hanger, however, if you have a different item of interest, all ideas are welcome. Display table to showcase your business inside atrium and 4 admissions
- **Place Your Bets** (printing sponsor): Your logo on back of 225 programs, door prize entries and timeline overview, as well as signage inside the ballroom, atrium and hallway. 4 admissions
- **Cash Me in Please** (meal sponsor): Lunch staff will wear t-shirts with your name while serving lunch. You will also be on 225 place mats and have signing at the buffet table. 4 admissions
- **Double Down** (refreshment sponsor): You will own one of the two 20-minute breaks (9:10am). Refreshment staff will wear t-shirts with your name while serving the refreshments. Table tent on the serving trays and personalized napkins to complement the refreshments. 4 admissions
- **All In** (centerpiece sponsor): Name on 35 centerpieces. 3 admissions
- **Double or Nothing** (decoration sponsor): Signage in ballroom, atrium, hallway and on 9 doors leading into ballroom. 3 admissions
- **Last Spin** (bag stuffer): Provide 225 promotional items for attendance bags. 1 admission

Contact Joell Aguirre at 618-467-2280 and jaguirre@growthassociation.com for all purchases and inquiries.



KAREN WILSON



RICHARD AVDOIAN



JENNIFER MECKLES



EMILY HEJNA