Welcome to the Islands!

On Thursday August 17th, the RiverBend Growth Association held its Business After Hours event which drew a crowd of 100+ as attendees mingled with a mission and had casual networking over an evening of activities and great food.

1st MidAmerica Credit Union joined with seven other hosts for the evening: Bella Milano, Cedarhurst of Bethalto, Encore Bath & Remodeling, Express Employment Services, Jack Schmitt Chevrolet, Robert Chick Fritz, and The Aquatic Center.

Two-person teams competed and teams were scored on three different rounds of judging: costume, diving, and a water relay.

Both the crowd and participants had a great time, and we all look forward to doing it again next year.

We would like to thank our judges for the evening - Mayor Cheryl Maguire, RBGA Chairman Augie Wuellner, and Wood River Township Clerk Sherry Tite.

Please join us next month on September 21st at Riverbend Kitchen & Millwork for our next Business After Hours event.

More event photos can be found on page 5.

(left) Thank you to all of our judges for the evening. (middle) 1st Place winners from The Aquatic Center (right) 2nd place winners from Midwest Members Credit Union

(left) Winner of 1st MidAmerica Credit Union’s attendance prize, Tyler Jackson (middle) Winner of Bella Milano’s attendance prize, Denise Woody (right) Winner of Jack Schmitt Chevrolet’s attendance prize, Jeremy Sagez

Winners of Encore Bath & Remodeling’s attendance prizes

(left) Winner of Express Employment Services’ attendance prize, Jamie Perkhiser (middle) Winner of The Aquatic Center’s attendance prize, Jacinda Dunlap (right) Winner of Robert “Chick” Fritz’s attendance prize, Tanya Doucleff
RBGA Honors August’s Small Business of the Month Winner - State Farm-Tom Lane

Community members gathered August 7th to present, honor and celebrate with State Farm-Tom Lane and his team as Riverbender.com did video coverage during the Small Business of the Month Award presentation.

State Farm-Tom Lane’s mission is to grow and retain State Farm insurance and financial services business by placing the customer’s best interest as the basis of their operations.

This office focuses on serving the Metro East and Riverbend area offering 24/7 quotes and services.

You can call the office today at 618-377-8912 or visit them at http://tomlaneagency.net for more information about services and products offered.

The RiverBend Growth Association is both the chamber of commerce and the economic development organization for the communities of the Riverbend. Each month one association business is selected as Small Business of the Month and receives approximately $4,200 worth of marketing. The association can be reached at 618-467-2280.

Watch this month’s video presentation at http://www.growthassociation.com/page/event-videos/

Welcome our newest members to the RiverBend Growth Association

R.F. Technologies, Inc.
Bob Noorian
542 S. Prairie St.
Bethalto, IL 62010
800-598-2370

R.F. Technologies, Inc. is your total solutions provider and advisor for your HD digital surveillance, drive-thru, and entertainment needs.

As a family run business since 1989, R. F. Technologies, Inc. continues to be a strong supporter of local community involvement. Starting in Bethalto out of the basement of CEO/Founder, Bob Noorian, we now have offices located in Bethalto, Buffalo Grove, IL and San Dimas, California.

For almost three decades we have become a trusted source, providing continuous outstanding service and quality products. From HD digital surveillance, entertainment/Sirius radio, complete drive-thru systems and accessories, new listen-in HD technology, order confirmation, timers, POS and table management, we truly are your one-stop-shop.

For more information about our products and services, please visit our website at www.RFTechno.com.

CHAMBER REPRESENTATIVE
• August 2017 •

Congratulations to this month’s Chamber Representative, prospective member Joe Groppel from The Kerpan Group at Benchmark Mortgage! The Kerpan Group at Benchmark Mortgage is a lending company that specializes in serving homebuyers through a mortgage planning approach, as well as growth through relationship building. Joe’s role on the team is deepening relationships with trusted referral partners, especially the rock star agents of the Riverbend! The Kerpan Group is proud to serve the Riverbend community!

You can reach Joe by phone, 618-692-9066, email at joe@thekerpangroup.com, or visit his website, www.benchmarkmidamerica.com.

Join us at next month’s Business After Hours on September 21st at Riverbend Kitchen and Millwork with your business card for your chance to become next month’s Chamber Representative.
A Penny for Your Thoughts at Breakfast Connections

The RiverBend Growth Association (RBGA) held a Breakfast Connections networking event on August 16 at the Best Western Premier. This month individuals gathered and mingled with a mission while enjoying breakfast from the newly remodeled buffet.

These networking events are led by Director of Member Services, Trish Holmes, and both promoted and planned with the help of the Promotions Committee. Meetings for the year have consisted of speakers or activities that can be incorporated into great networking tools. Activities will continue to spotlight businesses in attendance while attendees will have a creative and fun way to both learn about local businesses and promote their own.

This month an activity was enjoyed by more than 40 in attendance as each individual was able to share a professional or personal story for the year that was printed on his/her penny.

“We do business with people we know and trust. This is why we network to get to know people and to build trust”, said Gary Hoggatt with 1st MidAmerica Credit Union.

This activity was fun and engaging as well as memorable.

The Small Business of the Month is spotlighted at the beginning of both Breakfast Connections and Total Networking Luncheon events and this month was presented by the Small Business of the Month Awards Committee Chair, Amy Schaake of Riverbender.com. Schaake had the privilege to speak to the attendees about the committee, the Small Business of the Month nomination and scoring process, and to announce and highlight the winner for August - State Farm - Tom Lane.

Please join us at the next event which will be our Total Networking Luncheon at Bluff City Grill on September 13th at 11:30 a.m. where we will engage in another creative presentation given by Sheila Goins of Midwest Members Credit Union. She will be giving us a sneak peek into the presentation she will be giving at the RBGA's annual Women’s Seminar. We hope to see you there.

This networking event is growing every month and RSVP’s are not required but strongly encouraged to help promote your business or organization.
Kim Mosby

Where do you work?
Partners Insurance Agency

About how long have you been an ambassador?
1 ½ years

What’s your favorite Riverbend restaurant?
Roma’s Pizza

Where do you like to visit for vacation?
Anywhere with an ocean/beach

What do you like most about your job?
Helping families save money

What are your hobbies?
My kids

If you were stranded on a desert island, what three things would you bring?
Water, sunscreen and a good book

What is your favorite sport to watch?
Baseball

What is one sentence you’d like to hear from your boss?
I am giving you a raise because you’re awesome.

What is one of the things on your bucket list?
Visit Turkey where I was born

Where do you like to Shop Local?
Severs Market

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Dick Propes

Where do you work?
Retired Educator - Elementary Principal - Alton Community School District

About how long have you been an ambassador?
Member for 20 (ish) Years

What’s your favorite Riverbend restaurant?
Castelli’s at 255 - Moonlight

Where do you like to visit for vacation?
Europe and Florida

What did you like most about your job?
Really enjoyed working with the children

What are your hobbies?
Volunteering and Traveling

What is your favorite sport to watch?
Baseball -- GO CARDINALS

What is one of the things on your bucket list?
Return trip to Italy

Where do you like to Shop Local?
Severs Market

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Laura Robinson

Where do you work?
I work at Evergreen Place Supportive Living, a living community for seniors 65 and older that can assist most all income levels. I have worked here for eight and a half years. The first two and a half years as the Activity Director and the past 6 years as the Community Relations Coordinator.

About how long have you been an ambassador?
since May of 2017

What’s your favorite Riverbend restaurant?
Josephine’s

Where do you like to visit for vacation?
Holland, Michigan

What do you like most about your job?
Building relationships and making new friends with my residents, their families and out in the community

What are your hobbies?
Reading, spending quality time with my family and making crafts with my daughters.

If you were stranded on a desert island, what three things would you bring?
I would bring my bible, family, and ice mountain spring water.

What is your favorite sport to watch?
My favorite sport to watch is football...although I enjoyed all the high school sports my kids participated in.
T-Mobile opens store in Alton

The RiverBend Growth Association staff and Ambassadors celebrated the Grand Opening of the T-Mobile Store on July 28th. The store is located at 317-I Homer Adams Parkway in Alton. Kendra Beard, Store Manager for the location along with district managers and vendor reps joined the celebration. T-Mobile giveaways were handed out and Pat Schwarte of Riverbender.com videotaped the celebration that can be seen at Riverbender.com.

T-Mobile is a wireless provider offering cell phones, data plans, Internet devices & accessories. More information can be found at www.t-mobile.com.

Alton Mayor Brant Walker, Monica Bristow, President of the RBGA and Ambassadors Matt Labertew, David Knowles, Stephanie Tate, Dick Propes, Tom Hoechst, Matt Kotzamanis and Kathy Weaver assisted management and staff with the ribbon cutting on July 28.

Business After Hours (continued)

Here are some pictures of the competitions that took place at August’s event at The Aquatic Center.
Top 10 Money Tips Every Freshman Should Know

As college students head to campus for the fall semester, money management should be on their personal syllabus, according to Jersey State Bank. The bank has released ten money-saving tips to help college students get an early start on securing their financial future.

“It’s important for college students to take control of their financial future by saving wherever and whenever they can,” said Jim Hoefert, President/CEO. “They should treat personal finance like a second major and avoid unnecessary expenses now to reduce financial burden when they graduate.”

Jersey State Bank offers the following tips to help college students form a strong foundation for money management:

Create a budget. You’re an adult now and are responsible for managing your own finances. The first step is to create a realistic budget or plan and stick to it.

Watch spending. Keep receipts and track spending in a notebook. Pace spending and increase saving by cutting unnecessary expenses like eating out or shopping so that your money can last throughout the semester.

Use credit wisely. Understand the responsibilities and benefits of credit. Use it, but don’t abuse it. How you handle your credit in college could affect you well after graduation. Shop around for a card that best suits your needs.

Take advantage of your bank’s resources. Most banks offer online, mobile and text banking tools to manage your account night and day. Use these tools to check balances, pay bills, deposit checks and monitor transaction history.

Lookout for money. There’s a lot of money available for students -- you just have to look for it. Apply for scholarships, and look for student discounts or other deals.

Buy used. Consider buying used books or ordering them online. Buying books can become expensive and often used books are in just as good of shape as new ones.

Entertain on a budget. Limit your “hanging out” fund. There are lots of fun activities to keep you busy in college and many are free for students. Get the most from your student ID. Use your meal plan or sample new recipes instead of eating out.

Use only your bank’s ATMs. Avoid fees by using ATMs owned by or affiliated with your bank. If you must use an ATM that is not affiliated with your bank, take out larger withdrawals to avoid having to go back multiple times.

Expect the unexpected. Things happen, and it’s important that you are financially prepared when your car or computer breaks down or you have to buy an unexpected bus ticket home. You should start putting some money away immediately, no matter how small the amount.

Ask. This is a learning experience, so if you need help, ask. Your parents or your bank are a good place to start, and remember—the sooner the better.

Bank with us? Use our mobile app to find surcharge-free ATMs near you, deposit checks, pay bills, transfer money, and more! Financial freedom can be overwhelming and we are here to help. Don’t forget, if you need help, ask.

Jersey State Bank, the only locally owned Bank in Jersey County, has a long history of providing financial products and services to Jersey County and the surrounding area. Established in 1903, the Bank has assets in excess of $150 million and currently two offices in Jerseyville and Grafton to serve its customers.

Edward Jones - Jim Pipkin opens office in Wood River

On August 23, 2017 the RiverBend Growth Association (RBGA) hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for their new member Edward Jones-Jim Pipkin celebrating his relocation back to the Riverbend area.

Jim and his team can be found in Wood River in the Walmart Shopping Plaza next to H&R Block and T-Mobile. Stop in today or call them to schedule an appointment.

There will be an open house for clients and friends on September 20th from 3pm-7pm with a light dinner. Call the office for more details, 618-251-4932.

(right) RBGA Community members gather with Jim Pipkin and his staff and family to celebrate their relocation and new location in the Walmart Shopping Plaza.
Get Hip at Inaugural Alton Jazz & Wine Festival

“Celebrating Miles Davis”

Some of the hottest names in jazz, both regionally and nationally, will wail at the first-ever Alton Jazz and Wine Festival at Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater Saturday, Sept. 9 beginning at 4 p.m.

Enjoy the captivating jazz sounds of Keyon Harrold’s trumpet, New Orleans traditional jazz from the Funky Butt Brass Band, the jazz piano of the Ptah Williams Quartet and the swinging blues of the Dawn Weber Group while sipping wine along the banks of the Mississippi River.

Admission to the event is free, although a VIP experience is available which includes VIP parking, drink vouchers, reserved seats and access to VIP tent. VIP tickets are 2 for $25 or 1 for $15. Tickets are available at the Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa St., or at Metrotix.com.

The jazz festival was created as a salute to jazz legend Miles Davis who was born in Alton in 1926. A bronze statue honoring Davis was created two years ago and stands on 3rd Street in Alton. It is one of three Miles Davis statues in the world and the only one on the North American continent.

“We wanted to create a festival along the Mississippi River that honors Miles Davis and gives people the opportunity to hear some top jazz performers,” said Brett Stawar, a member of the Jazz and Wine Festival committee. “This is an event that will grow and we hope can become a signature jazz festival in the region.”

A variety of wine and food, to match the talent on stage, will be available for sale at concession stands at the event.

Headlining the festival will be Keyon Harrold. He has toured, recorded and produced with some of the world’s most respected music artists including Jay-Z, Keith Richards, Beyonce, Erykah Badu, Rihanna, Mary J Blige and Queen Latifah. He played trumpet on the soundtrack for the Miles Davis film, “Miles Ahead,” starring Don Cheadle, which won a Grammy for best soundtrack. Harrold was born in Ferguson, MO and has developed a reputation as one of the most sought-after, emotionally captivating trumpeters in the nation.

The Funky Butt Brass Band of St. Louis will also take the stage at the jazz festival. The band has its musical roots in the traditional New Orleans brass tunes but gives them a funky new flavor. The band was voted Best Funk/Soul/R&B Band by Riverfront Times in 2010 and Best Jam Band in 2011. It can be hot or cool, but it’s always going to be in the pocket.

Dawn Weber brings her energetic and charismatic trumpet and vocals to the riverfront with the Dawn Weber Group. Based in St. Louis, Dawn Weber’s musical tastes run from Ella Fitzgerald to Hendrix providing something for jazz lovers, blues lovers and rock lovers. A classically trained trumpet player, Weber plays with multiple St. Louis area groups including Son Montuno, Naked Rock Fight and Electro Funk Assembly.

Ptah Williams has been called “one of the finest jazz pianists” in St. Louis and has performed with jazz greats George Benson, Freddy Hubbard and James Moody. He has performed throughout Europe and the United States. He has won the Riverfront Times award for best pianist many times. Williams will perform with his quartet during the festival.

For more information on the Alton Jazz & Wine Festival, please visit: www.AltonAmphitheater.com.
Suit Up for a LeaderSHIFT

We are less than one month away from Women’s Seminar: Suit Up for a LeaderSHIFT. Director (Booth) Sponsors are still available! Space is limited, contact us today to increase your organization’s visibility at this event: https://goo.gl/LdUY6U.
Come and Enjoy this event with the rest of your peers!!

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• Lewis and Clark Community College
• Olive Oil Marketplace
• State Street Market

Register your sponsorship and attendance at https://goo.gl/LdUY6U.

sponsors as of August 24, 2017
### 2017 Speakers

**Dr. Katie Drake Sherer**

Dr. Katie Drake Sherer is a chiropractor and nutritionist in the Alton area. She, along with her husband, Dr. Jacob Sherer, owns two offices named Sherer Chiropractic Center with locations in Godfrey and Jerseyville. Dr. Katie was born and raised in the Godfrey area. She is an alumni of Marquette High School in Alton and Illinois College in Jacksonville, where she earned her B.S. in biology.

Dr. Katie earned her Doctor of Chiropractic, Masters of Science and Sports Rehabilitation and another Masters in Nutrition and Human performance all from Logan University in Chesterfield, MO. She has practiced chiropractic and nutrition in the Alton area since 2011. She specializes in weight loss and nutritional counseling for all ages and medical histories.

**Hon. Sarah D. Smith**

Sarah is a lifelong resident of Madison County. Right out of Edwardsville High School, she joined the Army Reserves as a light wheeled vehicle and power generator mechanic and served in the Army to put herself through Millikin University where she obtained her Bachelor’s in Political Science and thereafter went on to earn her Master’s in Public Policy and Juris Doctorate degree.

While she worked at Ezra & Associates she was mobilized for 45 days to provide support for Hurricane Katrina where she was awarded a Humanitarian Service Award. She deployed for 9 months to Kosovo in 2007, and immediately thereafter spent 12 months in Afghanistan. For her service in Afghanistan she was awarded the Bronze Star.

In 2013, Sarah took on a Federal attorney position with the Illinois National Guard in Springfield, Illinois. Later in 2013, she returned to Madison County as an assistant State’s Attorney. She was also assigned to the Madison County Veteran’s Treatment Court and assisted with that specialty court until her appointment to the bench in 2015.

She currently sits as an associate judge in the Family Division, Third Judicial Circuit, Madison County, Illinois. She is the presiding judge over the Domestic Violence Accountability Court and the Child Support Accountability Court. She was appointed Secretary of the Illinois Judges Foundation in 2016 and Board Member of the Illinois Judges Association in 2017.

Sarah is currently a Lieutenant Colonel and was recently selected to serve as Illinois first Military Judge for the Illinois Army National Guard. Sarah lives in Edwardsville with her husband Michael and her three young sons, Elias, Ezekiel and Ezra.

**Sheila Goins**

Rev. Sheila Goins has worked in the field of banking for more than 30 years. She is currently employed as the Branch Manager for Midwest Members Credit Union in Wood River.

She is the wife of Rev. David A. Goins, a retired Alton police sergeant, and fulltime pastor for Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in Alton. They have three adult children and 10 grandchildren. Sheila also works in ministry alongside her husband.

Rev. Sheila is a psalmist and has a great passion for motivational speaking. Her calling to motivate audiences has allotted her numerous speaking engagements throughout the community and abroad.

She is currently serving on the Board of Directors for Alton Memorial Hospital. In addition, she is the President and organizer for one of the first interracial and interdenominational community choirs within the Riverbend area known as the Riverbend Community Gospel Choir.

Rev. Goins continuously aims to be progressive and effective within the surrounding communities and embraces the vision to always serve others with purpose and joy. Her current hobbies include delighting in her grandchildren and staying healthy and fit.

**Michelle Conger**

Michelle Conger is the Chief Strategy Officer for OSF Healthcare System. She has over 20 years of healthcare leadership experience and has been in her current position since 2010. In this role, she has the responsibility for partnering with the CEO, board and leadership in the ongoing generation and refinement of the long term strategy which defines the competitive positioning of OSF Healthcare services. Along with these responsibilities, she also assists the organization and its leadership in ensuring the alignment of key strategic initiatives as well as marketing and business development plans. In her current position, Michelle has lead the creation of OSF Healthcare System’s innovation agenda including health technology incubation, usability and simulation strategies, and venture capital investment strategies. She has led many transformation initiatives across the System including the implementation of Epic, organizational design transformation, population health strategy development, and the creation of a system wide program management office. Her past roles have included Senior Vice President, Performance Improvement Division (2008-2010), and Executive Director of Planning for the Information Technology division (2006 – 2008). Her professional accomplishments also include achieving a 6 Sigma Black Belt (2002) and 6 Sigma Master Black Belt (2003). Michelle has a Master’s degree in social work from the University of Illinois.

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**BUSINESS EDGE**

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