

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

## JANUARY 2016

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## Annual Dinner 2016

The Annual Dinner networking event is geared toward informing the membership about the RBGA's business growth initiatives for the new year and to spotlight RBGA individuals and businesses making a difference in the community.

The success of this event lies within the RBGA's membership. 400 RBGA members and guests enjoyed a fabulous dinner provided by Lewis & Clark Community College.

The Ambassador of the Year award is an annual award presented to one of the 30 members of the Ambassador Committee. Each Ambassador earns points throughout the year for their volunteer efforts at our functions including attending ribbon cuttings and ground breakings, working at our networking events, and recruitment and retention of members.

Congratulations to Pat Schwarte of RiverBender.com on being named 2015 Ambassador of the Year.

The 12 Small Business of the Month winners from 2015 were acknowledged: Toddle Towne Learning Centers, Alvareita's Cosmetology, Mid America Audiology Group, My Antique Store, Dream Home Realty Centre, WBGZ, Precision



Electrical & Lighting, Olive Oil Marketplace, Route 3 Films, B.E. Stylin, Bemis Wilderman Chiropractic, and Gent Funeral Home.

Five RBGA Chairman Awards were presented at the Annual Dinner to Patricia Ackman, National MS Society Gateway Chapter, Lewis & Clark Community College, Monica Bristow, and Steve Thompson.

Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau also awarded the Spirit of Tourism Award to Patricia Ackman and Karen Wilson.

2015 Chairman of the Board Karen Cooper of Illinois American Water passed the gavel to Karen Wilson of State Farm as our 2016 Chairman of the Board.

Thank-you to the corporate sponsors of the 2016 Annual Dinner: 1<sup>st</sup> MidAmerica

Credit Union, AdVantage News, Alton Center Business Park, Alton School District, Alton Memorial Hospital, Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, Argosy, Associated Bank, Beverly Farm, Carrollton Bank, CNB Bank & Trust, Contegra Construction Company, Evergreen Place Supportive Living, IBEW Local Union #649, Illinois American Water, Lewis & Clark Community College, Liberty Bank, OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center, Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery, Phone Masters, Raifort Properties, Riverbender.com, Tom & Robin Long, Shell Community Federal Credit Union, Sheppard Morgan & Schwaab, St. Louis Regional Airport, St. Peters Hardware & Rental, State Farm-Karen Wilson, The Telegraph, TheBANK of Edwardsville, Village of Godfrey, WBGZ/AltonDailyNews.com and Werts Welding & Tank Service.

*more photos on page 2*



Spirit of Tourism Award from Alton Regional CVB – pictured left to right - Brett Stawar, Pat Ackman, Karen Wilson, Ann Badasch



RiverBend Growth Association Chairman Award Winner **Steve Thompson for Reach Out and Read** - pictured left to right: Carol Fletcher (CNB Bank & Trust), Steve Thompson (CNB Bank & Trust), Elaine Kane (Alton CUSD 11), Renee Hart (Alton CUSD 11)



Karen Cooper as outgoing Chairman of RiverBend Growth Association Board of Directors



RiverBend Growth Association incoming Board Chairman Karen Wilson and outgoing Board chairman Karen Cooper



RiverBend Growth Association Chairman Award winner - **National MS Society Gateway Chapter and Lewis and Clark Community College** - pictured left to right: Lori Artis (LCCC), Dave Blackwell (National MS Society), Monica Bristow (RiverBend Growth Association), Amy Klueter-Thomas (National MS Society), Randy Adler (National MS Society), Rebecca Fehlig (National MS Society), Angela Radcliff (National MS Society)

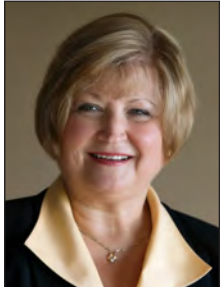


RiverBend Growth Association Ambassador of the Year Pat Schwarte

# LEADERSHIP... IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT.

## Meet our Leaders for 2016.

**CHAIRMAN**



**Karen Wilson**  
State Farm Insurance  
& Financial Services

**PAST CHAIRMAN**



**Karen Cooper**  
Illinois American Water

**TREASURER**



**Mike Fitzgerald**  
Scheffel Boyle

**CHAIRMAN ELECT**



**Augie Wuellner**  
Alton Securities Group



**Jeff Allsman**  
Village of  
Bethalto



**Tom Berry**  
Jackson Lewis  
P.C.



**Dale Blachford**  
Liberty Bank



**Jake Bodi**  
Ameren Illinois



**David Braasch**  
Alton Memorial  
Hospital



**Greg Caffey**  
City of Alton



**Stephanie  
Dykstra**  
Imaging Center



**Melissa Erker**  
Phillips 66 Wood  
River Refinery



**Mike Farrell**  
Helmkamp  
Construction Co.



**Brandon  
Ferguson**  
Baxter  
Distributing



**Kevin Hamilton**  
Carpenters Local  
664



**Pam Heepke**  
Raifort  
Properties



**Jennifer  
Jacobsen**  
Argosy Casino



**John Keller**



**Charlie  
Linnemeyer**  
Alton Steel, Inc.



**Alan Meyer**  
1st MidAmerica  
Credit Union



**Scott  
Reichmann**  
Barber Murphy  
Group



**John Roberts**  
Roberts Motors



**Ed Ryrice**  
Regions Morgan  
Keegan Trust



**Kent Scheffel**  
Lewis and Clark  
Community  
College



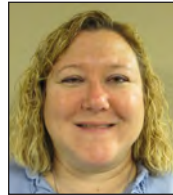
**Diane Schuette**  
OSF Saint  
Anthony's Health  
Center



**Rob Schwartz**  
TheBANK of  
Edwardsville



**Jim Shrader**  
The Telegraph



**Cindy Smalley**  
Cope Plastics,  
Inc.



**Sam Stemm**  
WBGZ Radio



**Dave Stevenson**  
Quality Buick  
GMC Cadillac



**Steve  
Thompson**  
CNB Bank &  
Trust, N.A.



**Martha  
Warford**  
Beverly Farm



**Dwight Werts**  
Werts Welding &  
Tank Service



**Charlie Yancey**  
IBEW Local 649

## Message from Incoming Chair



Karen Wilson

As the RiverBend Growth Association begins its 31<sup>st</sup> year, I am excited about the programs and events offered to support local businesses and the economy of the area. As a Growth Association we provide the dual role of a Chamber of Commerce and an Economic Development Organization. As such, we not only actively promote the activities of our member businesses, but we also work closely with governmental entities to help develop more employment opportunities and address the needs of our member communities of southwestern Illinois.

The RBGA Team is outstanding in their efficiency and attention to the needs of its members. They look out for economic indicators,

the impact of legislation, and the importance of doing business locally. They provide information, promotion, training, seminars, activities, events, and networking that are so valuable to its members. The membership itself collaborates to make the organization just that much stronger.

I encourage each of you to join if you have not already done so. If you are a member, I encourage you to get involved. Like most things in life, you get out of something what you put into it. Come be a part of the support system that helps all of us grow and become strong.

“Coming together is a beginning.

Keeping together is progress.

Working together is success!”

*Anonymous*

The RiverBend is a great region to do business. Let’s talk it up and get involved in 2016!

## Message from Outgoing Chair



Karen Cooper

It is hard to believe that 2015 and my term as Chairman of the Riverbend Growth Association have come and gone.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve an organization that represents all 11 of our area communities that so wisely decided more than 30 years ago to combine their Chambers. Our common interests and combined voices to help attract, promote and support new and existing enterprise growth throughout our beautiful “Riverbend” area.

As an Economic Development Organization, we collaborate with state, county and local officials to develop and retain the economic engine of our region---our employers!

Following are just a few of the projects and events that have significant impacts on our local economy over the past year:

Construction began on the Multi Modal Transportation Center \$25 million

Construction began on a new Hampton Inn in Alton \$6.2 million

Bike MS brought in \$1.9 million in donations with more

than \$300,000 spent locally on hotels and local vendors

Roxana Water Treatment Plant was completed \$7.9 million

As a Chamber of Commerce, we actively promote activities that allow our member businesses to interact in positive ways, and just to name a few--networking luncheons and breakfasts, Business After Hours, Small Business Saturday, Legislative Updates, annual Women’s Conference, Leadership Academy, Ribbon Cuttings, the annual Golf Outing and, of course, the Duck Race.

All of this could not happen without the hard work of our Staff and Board of Directors who strive to be sure that your membership has value to your business.

I would like to say thank you to the RBGA members. It is through your efforts and energy that the Riverbend communities continue to be a great place to live and work. Your involvement is leaving a legacy for generations to come.

Many thanks Monica, RBGA Staff, Board of Directors, Past Chairs and members for making 2015 a successful year. Thanks also to Illinois American Water for enabling my participation in the organization and the time to serve as Chair.

Finally, best wishes to our incoming Chair, Karen Wilson. Karen’s enthusiasm, energy and passion for the Riverbend area will lead the organization to even greater success in 2016.

## Welcome our new board members

### Greg Caffey

I bring a wealth of knowledge from both the private and public sector. My private sector experience includes financial planning and management of an independent investment advisory firm. I currently serve as the Director of Development & Housing for the City of Alton where my duties include grant writing/administration, development and implementation of economic development and housing programs, and fiscal oversight of grant funding from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A graduate of Alton Sr. High School, I completed post-secondary education at Illinois State University receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance. I also hold a Master of Business Administration degree from Missouri Baptist University. A strong proponent of community engagement, I remain active in the local community through various civic, social, and religious causes.



Caffey

### Brandon Fergurson

I have lived in Alton for more than 35 years. I am currently the store manager at Baxter Distributing in Alton. Along with managing the store, I am the Director of online retail sales and development. I have been married for 15 years to Ann (Baxter) with three kids. My oldest is a freshman at Alton High School. I was raised with a respect for community involvement. My mother Linda Fergurson has starred in many plays and musicals at Alton Little Theater and has been JoJo the Clown for the last 40 years with the Municipal Band. I look forward to offering what I can.



Fergurson

### John Roberts

I am a true product of the Riverbend area. Born and raised in the Alton/Godfrey area, I graduated from Alton High School and earned my Bachelor's degree in Business from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. After graduating, I attended the National Automobile Dealers Association's Dealer Candidate Academy. I have been employed at our family business, Roberts Motors, for more than 30 years. I have been married to my wife, Tonya, for almost 26 years; we have one child, Stephanie, who will graduate from Fontbonne University with her Master's degree in Speech Language Pathology this year. My father was a believer in learning the business the right way, so I started from the ground up, washing cars while in college. I started selling cars after graduating and then worked my way up in management over the years.



Roberts

## Mayor Report - Tom Thompson, City of Grafton

A beauty on the river and a beacon of opportunity

Grafton is a picturesque small community nestled between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers and the beautiful limestone bluffs that runs the length of the National Scenic Byway (Rt. 100).

Grafton has experienced unprecedented growth the past few years. Several new business permits were issued. The natural scenic beauty and the diversity of activities draw people to our historic city.

Tourists from far and near come to this charming historic river town to enjoy wineries, a wide variety of riverview dining establishments, shops, the canopy zip-line, parasailing and a beautiful marina. Grafton is home to a variety of riverfront activities, such as fishing, boating, water sports, bird watching photography, hiking and Raging Rivers Water Park. Check out the charming overnight stay places. They will make you feel like a friend of the family.

A new indoor skating rink has opened in Grafton at the Loading Dock. This adds another reason for families and groups to visit and explore our city.

The newest addition to Grafton is the Grafton Oyster Bar. The owners of the famous Broadway Oyster Bar, John & Vickie Johnson are teaming

up with Executive Chef, Brad Hagen to open an Oyster Bar in Grafton. This will draw

visitors from far and near to our city. The opening should take place in early March 2016.

Main Street is listed on the National Historic Register with many examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture. A self-guided walking tour of historic sites in Grafton is available. Grafton was awarded two "Governor Home Town Awards." The business community continues to grow and expand as does the residential community. Grafton's safe, friendly city located on the Natural Scenic Byway offers a variety of residential opportunities from upscale condominiums and villas to a beautiful residential community located in a park like setting out of the flood plain.

Grafton's residents are proud of its history, its natural beauty, its accomplishments and friendly, safe place they call home. Most residents feel they are always on vacation living in Grafton.

Grafton invites you to come for a weekend and stay for a lifetime.



# AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

## Maura Wueller

United Way of Greater St. Louis

**Maura Wuellner** joined the RBGA Ambassadors a year ago and has greatly enjoyed working with this great group of volunteers. She is starting her third year with United Way and is part of the regional management team with oversight responsibilities for two offices. Maura works primarily with the fundraising campaigns for both the Southwest Illinois and Tri-Cities Area Divisions offices, and works with many local companies by helping them run a successful campaign, speaking at events and raising awareness for United Way's mission and services. In addition to supervising the overall activity for both divisions, she manages five part-time campaign representatives in the fall.

Maura and her husband, Augie, live in Godfrey and have two grown children.



## Jenna Andres

Scheffel Boyle

I was born and raised in Jerseyville, IL and graduated from Jersey Community High School in 2004. I obtained my Bachelor of Science in Accountancy from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in December 2007. I am currently a Supervisor/CPA with Scheffel Boyle, one of the largest CPA firms in Southern Illinois. It was also listed by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of the largest CPA firms in the St. Louis area for the last 25 years. I am located in our Alton office and have been there for over eight years.

I began serving on the Ambassador Committee for the Riverbend Growth Association in March 2012. I am an active volunteer for various RBGA events and enjoy the opportunity it gives me to greet the many faces of the Riverbend community. I have created many friendships and business relationships while working at Scheffel Boyle and while serving as an ambassador and I look forward to developing and strengthening those relationships. My husband and I were married in September 2013. We have lived in Godfrey for over three years and feel very fortunate to call the Riverbend our home. In my free time, I enjoy hanging out with my husband, family, and friends and watching Green Bay Packers football and NASCAR on Sundays.



## Karen Baker-Brcnic

Alton Marina

**Karen Baker-Brcnic** belongs to the Growth Association and serves as an ambassador, is a commissioner of the Alton Amphitheater, sits on the Board of the Alton Regional CVB, is a member of the Illinois Beverage Association, and is involved in the events of the River Keeper, Con Trios Yacht Club and various waterway groups.

Karen is the owner of Parrot Point Marina, Inc. and operator of the Alton Marina. The Alton Marina is host to approximately 300 slips on the Alton waterfront. Besides the day to day operation she is host to many private & public events at the marina and works closely with the Corps of Engineers and the Coast Guard and other local organizations for the improvement and expansion of events on the waterfront. The Alton Marina was awarded the Captain of the Riverbend and January 2010 Small Business of the Month. Karen also was fortunate to appear on the cover of the women's magazine of Flaire in the spring of 2009 and was honored with being named as a Woman of Distinction by the YWCA in 2012.

Karen was married to the late Bob Brcnic, a local businessman, and she lives in Rosewood Heights. Bob has a daughter (Alisa) and a son and daughter-in-law (Steven and Julia Brcnic) and Karen and Bob are blessed with three wonderful grandchildren Casey, Spencer and Madeline who bring great joy on a daily basis. Karen feels very lucky to live and work in such a nice community.

The Alton Marina will be hosting many events this year at the Marina as it is the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Marina. The Big 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party will be August 20, 2016....the public is invited to come celebrate! Bring those dancing shoes!!



## Welcome our newest members to the RiverBend Growth Association

### Elizabeth Werts, Hairstylist & Makeup Artist

Elizabeth Werts  
c/o His Excellency  
2720 Grovelin St. #C  
Godfrey IL 62035  
(618) 550-9357



In 2013 I graduated from cosmetology school knowing I wanted to keep learning even more about the beauty industry. While continuing to build my clientele I took a 40 hour one on one makeup course with a professional makeup artist in St. Louis. Besides specializing in makeup, including airbrush, I also specialize in hair color, haircuts and hairstyling. When I am not in the salon I am usually keeping busy with on-site weddings and photoshoots. I recently won 'best of the best hairstylist' in the Riverbend area. It was a great honor to be recognized by the Riverbend for my work. I will be graduating from Lewis and Clark Community College this year and hope to open my own salon in the near future. I recently joined the River Bend Growth Association to meet other professionals and network with my community. I look forward to what the future brings for me and my business.

### Lake Drive Logistics

Tim Kuebrich Owner  
6344 Lake Drive  
Godfrey IL 62035  
(618) 467-0041  
lakedrivelogistics.com

Lake Drive Logistics (LDL) is owned and operated by Tim Kuebrich. Kuebrich's connection to the freight



transportation started when he moved his first business, AB Machine Shop, to its current location at 6344 Lake Drive. After locating to the new facility Tim saw the value in the rail side access that came with the property. Through the whole community, the rail industry is on the uptake again and will be a great value and asset for the company and the community.

"We're changing the mode of how things are done. Whatever a logistics company we can do, short term or long term warehousing needs from trucks to train, to train to trucks."

After an 18 month wait on the approval for the repairs to mead to the rail line and spur, Lake Drive Logistics received their first shipment of more than 100,000 bags of road salt from Kansas City Southern on November 17, 2015. LDL will store and ship out as needed via trucks.

Since the first delivery business has progressed quickly. LDL has trains on the way

from Mexico from a new customer based out of Ireland. This new product will arrive mid-January and will continue to be delivered on a weekly basis.

If all goes as planned, Kuebrich is hoping the warehouse will be filled to near capacity with a variety of products by mid-summer.

### Laux Brickhouse Grille

Ross Laux Owner  
212 N Prairie Street  
Bethalto IL 62010  
(618) 377-4800



The Laux Brickhouse Grille is a family restaurant with a friendly environment and outgoing staff. The Brickhouse has daily specials and weekend entertainment such as acoustic bands and DJ/Karaoke. The restaurant has been completely remodeled with a new back patio added on and is ran by owners Ross and Dawn Laux. Some longtime favorites such as Buffalo Fish on Fridays, Pork tenderloin, and homemade onion rings and mushrooms are still a main focus on the menu, along with some new favorites such as homemade cheese sticks, baked goat cheese marinara dip, and build your own Brickhouse burger.

## Evergreen Place Supportive Living Name Change

Evergreen Place Supportive Living is still located at 100 Glenhaven Drive, Alton, IL, but is now operating under a new name. Formerly known as Glenhaven Gardens, the Evergreen Place Supportive Living team showcased their new name at a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday January 15, 2016.

Located on the campus of Alton Memorial Hospital, Evergreen Place Supportive Living offers a 92-apartment

community for seniors to have a friendly and comfortable living environment.

The team's mission at Evergreen Place Supportive Living is to provide exceptional care each and every day.

For more information please call 618.462.1500 or visit [www.evergreenslc.com/alton](http://www.evergreenslc.com/alton).



Evergreen Place Supportive Living's staff was joined by residents, community leaders, and RiverBend Growth Association Ambassadors: avid Knowles of Atrium Hotel, Mayor Brant Walker, Illinois State Representative Dan Beiser, Stacey Loveland of Foxes Grove, Matt Kotzamanis of TheBANK of Edwardsville-Alton, Tom Hoechst of CNB Bank & Trust, and Monica Bristow President of RiverBend Growth Association.

## Quality Buick GMC Cadillac named January Small Business of the Month

Congratulations to Quality Buick GMC Cadillac on being named the January 2016 Small Business of the Month.

Quality Buick GMC Cadillac, located at 1620 E. Homer Adams Parkway in Alton, has been serving in the Riverbend community since 1958. To enhance services and sales, Quality moved from Broadway to their current location in 1997. Besides new and pre-owned vehicle specials, Quality Buick GMC Cadillac offers a variety of services ranging from tire changes, break services, exhaust inspections

and repairs, along with shuttle services to name a few.

For more information on Quality Buick GMC Cadillac, visit them at <http://www.qualitygmcars.com> or call 618-465-8881.

Congratulations to the team at Quality Buick GMC Cadillac on the award of January 2016 Small Business of the Month! Pictured are Justin Windmiller, Joe Hanahan, Chad Stevenson, David Stevenson, Greg Stevenson, Leslie Burch, Keith St Cin, Angelo Kotzamanis, Josh Harrison and Toby Gates.



Many RBGA members celebrated with Quality Buick GMC Cadillac: David Knowles and Jacinda Gust of Atrium Hotel & Conference Center, Matt Kotzamanis of TheBANK of Edwardsville, Sarah Boyland of Bee Noticed Marketing Solutions, Martha Schultz of First Clover Leaf Bank, Therese Kuddes of Kuddes Advertising Specialties, Alton Mayor Brent Walker, Pat Schwarte of Riverbender.com, Steve Thompson and Tom Hoechst of CNB Bank & Trust, Amy Schaake of the Edwardsville Intelligencer, Trish Holmes RBGA Director Member Services, Cara Pascal of Options Now Medical Pregnancy Center, Kim Mosby & Michael Balding of Partners Insurance

## Young Adults Committee Visits Riverbend Head Start & Family Services for a Play Date

By Taylor Antoine and Kara Meyer  
On January 14, the students on the RiverBend Growth Association's Young Adults Committee spent the morning getting to know Riverbend Head Start & Family Services.

The Young Adults Committee consists of two student representatives from each of the following area high schools: Alton High School, Civic Memorial High School, East Alton-Wood River High School, Marquette Catholic High School and Roxana High School. The student representatives from each school choose a non-profit organization where the entire committee takes a day to volunteer and learn between the months of December and April.

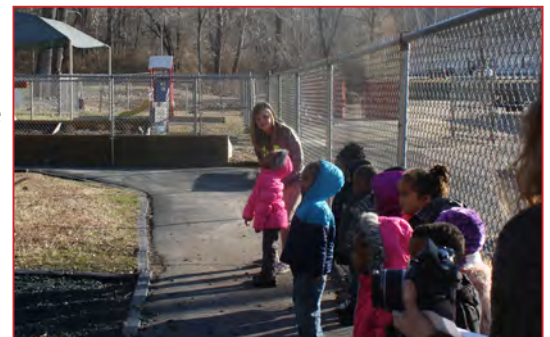
Kara Meyer and Taylor Antoine, the student representatives for Roxana High School, chose to partner with the Riverbend Head Start & Family Services because of their passion for working with children. During the volunteer experience, all of the students on the Young Adults Committee helped teachers with daily tasks, like serving breakfast, and played with the children that attend Riverbend Head Start.

"The Riverbend Head Start staff members were very welcoming and showed us around their building," Taylor

Antoine, Junior Representative from Roxana High School, said. "We were assigned to different classrooms in pairs to help the teachers and to play with the kids."

The students also learned about Riverbend Head Start's services and its value in the community. Riverbend Head Start & Family Services is a non-profit agency that provides children living in poverty or challenged with special circumstances with an early childhood education. The organization teaches preschoolers early math, reading and vocabulary so they are on the same level as their peers when they enter kindergarten, and also helps infants and toddlers improve gross motor skills and learn socialization skills. Children also receive health and dental exams.

"The experience as a whole was very eye-opening and had a huge impact on off us because we saw firsthand what it's like," Kara Meyer, Senior Representative from Roxana High School, said. "It was a great non-profit: Taylor and I would like to go back and help whenever we can."



Students got a chance to take the children outside to play on the playground and play the game "Red Light, Green Light" as part of the Child Development Program.



Students painting with the children in the classrooms as a part of the Child Development Program Riverbend Head Start & Family Services incorporates into their daily activities.

For more information about the Young Adults Committee, visit <http://www.growthassociation.com/page/young-adults-committee/>.



## Thanks to our renewing members for 2016.

(paying December 19, 2015 – January 25, 2016)

A Closer Look Investigations, LLC	Corridor 67	Heneghan and Associates, P.C.	Prestige Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning, Inc.
Airport Plaza Bowl	COUNTRY Financial® - Jeffrey Lauritzen	Hillcrest Apartments	R.W. Boeker Company, Inc.
Alton Educational Foundation	CR Systems, Inc.	Homefield Energy	Raifort Commerce Park
Alton Little Theater, Inc.	Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc.	Hornsey Moving and Storage Co.	RE/MAX Integrity Realty Group
Alton Materials	Crown of Thorns Customs	Humbert Road Dentistry	Real Deals on Home Décor
Alton Memorial Hospital	Datamax Office Systems	Illinois American Water	Restoration House Auto Body
Alton MultiSpecialists	Del's Construction	Illinois Business Journal	Riverbend Family Ministries
Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau	Dynegy Midwest Generation / Wood River Power Station	IMPACT CIL	Riverbend Head Start & Family Services
Alton Symphony Orchestra	East Alton, Village of	Int. Broth. of Elect. Workers #649	RiverBender.com
Altonized Community Federal Credit Union	East Alton-Wood River High School District 14	Julia's Banquet Center	Riverbender.com Community Ctr.
Ameren Economic Development Department	East End Improvement Assoc.	Keller, John	Robert "Chick" Fritz, Inc.
America's Central Port	Edward Jones - Greg Reinhardt	Kitchen & Bath Outlet Center	RobertsLaw, LLC
ApexNetwork Physical Therapy	Edwardsville Intelligencer	Kreative Kids Learning Center	Rose Lawn Memory Gardens, Inc.
Associated Bank - Alton	Eliot Gray Construction	Lauschke & Assoc. Real Estate	Rose Optical
Atrium Hotel & Conference Center	Elsah, Village of	Lewis and Clark Community College	Roxana Comm. Unit School Dist. #1
Auto Butler Car Wash & Express Lube	Encore Bath & Shower Inc.	Liberty Bank - Alton	Saint Anthony's Physician Group
Barrett Heating & Cooling Inc.	Enjoy Church	Lucy's Place	Schiber Truck Company, Inc.
Barton Properties, LLC	Evergreen Place Supportive Living	Luken Agency, Inc., The	Schwartzkopf Printing, Inc.
Bella Milano Restaurant	Express Employment Professionals	Macias Insurance Agency, Inc.	Security Finance
Belle Street Key Service	Extra Help, Inc.	Madison Co. Employment & Training Dept.	Shell Comm. Federal Credit Union
Bemis Wilderman Chiropractic	Fazoli's Restaurant	Madison Co. Planning & Development	Sherwin Williams Paint Co.
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwestern IL	First Clover Leaf Bank - Wood River	Madison County Community Development	SNIP Alliance
Bliss	Foster Township	Med Resources Inc.	South Roxana, Village of
Bluff City Athletic Club, NFP	Franklin & Vaughn, LLC	Metro Supply & Equipment Co.	St. Louis Regional Airport
Bluff City Grill	GCS Credit Union	Mid America Audiology Group	State Farm - Tom Lane
Bold Enterprises Inc. d/b/a McDonald's	Genesis Financial Group	Missouri Baptist University	Steck-Cooper & Co.- Insurance and Bonds
Boys & Girls Club of Bethalto	Gent Funeral Home, Inc.	My Just Desserts	Toddle Towne Learning Center - EA
Brickman Orthodontics	Gentelin's on Broadway	National MS Society	Walter Hale Ltd. Realty
Carpenters Local 664	Giving for You (Giving Glass)	Norman Brothers	White Birch Interiors & Home Accents
Carrollton Bank	Godfrey, Village of	Norton & Rain, Inc.	Wm M. BeDell Achievement & Resource Ctr.
Carver's BBQ, Inc.	Grafton Chamber of Commerce	Oasis Women's Center	Wood River Refinery History Museum
Centerstone	Grafton, City of	Olive Oil Marketplace	Wood River Township
Challenge Unlimited, Inc.	Green Tree Inn	OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center	Wood River, City of
Chef Bob's Catering	H & R Block - Wood River	Partners Insurance Agency	
Clark Properties	Hanover Associates Storage	Peckham Guyton Albers & Viets, Inc. (PGAV)	
CNB Bank & Trust, N.A.	Hansen Meat Company	Personal Finance Company	
Community Living Options	Hartford, Village of	Piasa Motor Fuels, Inc.	
Community Title & Escrow, Ltd.	Hayner Public Library District	Pope Rental Properties	
	Heitz Optical Company		
	Helmkamp Construction Co.		

## Jersey State Bank Offers 7 Tips to Prevent Tax ID Fraud

*Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week is Jan. 25-29*

As Americans begin the process of filing tax returns, identity thieves are scheming to get their hands on that money. Tax identity theft has been the most common form of identity theft reported to the Federal Trade Commission for the past five years. Jersey State Bank is using Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week, Jan. 25-29, to raise consumer awareness and provide tips to prevent tax ID fraud.

"Identity thieves look for any and every opportunity to steal your information, especially during tax season," said Jim Hoefert, President/CEO. "Consumers should always be on high alert but especially during tax season and take every step they can to protect their personal and financial information."

Tax identity fraud takes place when a criminal files a false tax return using a stolen Social Security number in order to fraudulently claim the refund. Identity thieves generally file false claims early in the year and victims are unaware until they file a return and learn one has already been filed in their name.

To help consumers prevent tax ID fraud, Jersey State Bank is offering the following tips:

- **File early.** File your tax return as soon as you're able giving criminals less time to use your information to file a false return.
- **File on a protected wi-fi network.** If you're using an online service to file your return, be sure you're connected to a password-protected personal network. Avoid using public networks like a wi-fi hotspot at a coffee shop.

- **Use a secure mailbox.** If you're filing by mail, drop your tax return at the post office or an official postal box instead of your mailbox at home. Some criminals look for completed tax return forms in home mailboxes during tax season.
- **Find a tax preparer you trust.** If you're planning to hire someone to do your taxes, get recommendations and research a tax preparer thoroughly before handing over all of your financial information.
- **Shred what you don't need.** Once you've completed your tax return, shred the sensitive documents that you no longer need and safely file away the ones you do.
- **Beware of phishing scams by email, text or phone.** Scammers may try to solicit sensitive information by impersonating the IRS. Know that the IRS will not contact you by email, text or social media. If the IRS needs information, they will contact you by mail first.
- **Keep an eye out for missing mail.** Fraudsters look for W-2s, tax refunds or other mail containing your financial information. If you don't receive your W-2s, and your employer indicates they've been mailed, or it looks like it has been previously opened upon delivery, contact the IRS immediately.

If you believe you're a victim of tax identity theft or if the IRS denies your tax return because one has previously been filed under your name, alert the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490. In

addition, you should:

- **Respond immediately to any IRS notice** and complete IRS Form 14039, Identity Theft Affidavit.
- **Contact your bank immediately**, and close any accounts opened without your permission or tampered with.
- **Contact the three major credit bureaus** to place a 'fraud alert' on your credit records:
  - Equifax, [www.Equifax.com](http://www.Equifax.com), 1-800-525-6285
  - Experian, [www.Experian.com](http://www.Experian.com), 1-888-397-3742
  - TransUnion, [www.TransUnion.com](http://www.TransUnion.com), 1-800-680-7289
- **Continue to pay your taxes** and file your tax return, even if you must do so by paper.

More information about tax identity theft is available from the FTC at [ftc.gov/taxidtheft](http://ftc.gov/taxidtheft) and the IRS at [irs.gov/identitytheft](http://irs.gov/identitytheft).

Jersey State Bank, the only locally owned Bank in Jersey County, has a long history as a trusted provider of financial products and services to Jersey County and the surrounding area. Established in 1903, the Bank has assets in excess of \$140 million and currently two offices to serve its customers in Jerseyville and Grafton.

## Freer Auto Body and Accessories, Inc. receives recognition

Freer Auto Body and Accessories, Inc. 4512 N. Alby Road, Godfrey, IL is recognized as I-CAR Gold Class Professionals for the twelfth consecutive year. This Gold Class recognition is the highest role-relevant training achievement recognized by the collision repair industry. It is estimated only 10% of repair shops nationwide currently meet the rigorous Gold Class standard. The I-CAR Professional Development Program provides collision repair with reliable training for maintaining up-to-date knowledge and skills that contribute to proper repairs. By 2016, more than 200 new and redesigned vehicles will hit the market ... many with lightweight materials and advanced safety systems. The collision industry must stay abreast of these changes to meet the challenges of this ongoing technological change.

Not only is Freer Auto Body I-CAR Gold Class certified but they are also certified by Assured Performance, a non-profit consumer advocacy organization. In achieving this certification, the business is now a part of an auto body repair network and is officially recognized by Cadillac, GMC, Buick, Chevrolet, Lincoln, Ford, Fiat, Dodge, Jeep, RAM, Mopar and SRT performance line, Chrysler, Hyundai and Infiniti. Freer Auto Body has passed all of these certification processes. Less than 5% of Body Shops across the nation are able to meet the requirements. The certification criteria are based on auto manufacturer's requirements.

These requirements are critical to ensure correct repair, fit, finish, durability and safety after a collision. Freer Auto Body is commissioned by several local automobile dealers for their auto repair needs.

Any questions, please contact Tim Freer, 618-466-6151.

### 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/>

## Local man wins \$1,000 from H&R Block

On January 21, 2016, Jaime H. was presented a check at the H&R Block, located at 2620 Homer Adams Parkway, Alton, IL, for simply being entered into a drawing and filing his taxes early with the company. "I've never won anything before so this is a blessing" says Jaime.



Check presentation with Jaime H's family and Alton H&R Block Staff.

H&R Block is giving out \$1,000 a day to 1,000 clients for 32 days! Thirty-two thousand people will win \$1,000 during the first month of tax season with H&R Block. There have been 14 winners in the area ranging from Alton, IL to East. St. Louis, IL. Out of that 14, five have been winners from the Alton & Wood River area.

You must file at any one of the H&R Block offices before Feb 15<sup>th</sup> to be entered into the drawing. H&R Block is encouraging everyone to file earlier this year. By doing so, taxpayers are helping protect themselves from tax refund fraud. For more information and rules, please visit [www.hrblock.com/grand](http://www.hrblock.com/grand). Congratulations Jaime.

## TRIVIA NIGHT

• Saturday, March 12, 2016 •

Civic Memorial High School  
200 School Street, Bethalto IL 62010

• Doors Open 6:00 pm • Trivia begins 7:00 pm •

Paying out 1st, 2nd & 3rd places of \$100, \$75 and \$50

**\$80 PER TABLE**  
(maximum 8 people per table)

- Basket Raffle
- No guilt 50-50
- Bring your own snacks and non-alcoholic beverages

### BATTLE OF THE SCHOOLS



Call the RiverBend Growth Association  
at 618-467-2280 to make your reservation.

**RiverBend**  
GROWTH ASSOCIATION  
Saving Futures, Encouraging Growth in Southeastern Illinois

Benefiting RBGA Young Adults  
Committee Scholarship Fund