At Illini Mattress Co., the Stout family has had you covered for more than 30 years.
There’s nothing more important than your health. That’s why finding a healthcare partner you can trust is so important.

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- **34 SPECIALTIES**
- **27 LOCATIONS**
- **179 MEDICAL PROVIDERS**
- **MyChristie PATIENT PORTAL**

SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT ONLINE!
4 BEYOND THE BOARDROOM
Get to know Allerton Park Executive Director Derek Peterson, who loves his mobile office.

8 WHICH IS BETTER, FIVE OR FOUR?
A popular trend: The four-day work week. But does it make sense? That’s a tough question, says Champaign County Chamber of Commerce’s Laura Weis.

9 FINE PRINT
Recent building permits from Champaign, Urbana, Savoy, Mahomet, Monticello and Rantoul.

16 RUNS IN THE FAMILY, PART I
Father Kenneth and daughter Kennetra aren’t blowing smoke when they say they love working together at Shelby’s Cigar and Daquiri Lounge.

20 RUNS IN THE FAMILY, PART II
In 1990, Ed Stout started Illini Mattress Co. Today, his daughter and son are playing a bigger role in the business. But he’s not ready to step away completely just yet.

26 RUNS IN THE FAMILY, PART III
Growing up, Mark Whitsitt wanted no part of his dad Steve’s business. Once he stuck his toe in the water, though, he was hooked.

28 GUEST COLUMN
Age-Friendly Champaign-Urbana looks at how local parks helped people thrive during the pandemic.

30 SHE’S DELIVERING FOR CHRISTIE
Get to know OB/GYN Candace McGregor, the first female Chief Medical Officer in C-U.

11 Indicators
Our highly sought-after facts and figures for the greater Central Illinois area.

From the editor’s desk
It’s time again for one of our favorite projects — our fourth People’s Choice.

The first step of the contest is the nomination period — which will be opening in mid-May. This is critical, as we need you to nominate your favorites in over 150 categories. If a business is not nominated during this period, they cannot be added for the voting period, which will kick off in June.

This year’s contest offers new components and bigger ad packages — spanning Champaign Multimedia Group’s print, radio and digital offerings.

Want in? Contact Nancy Sims (217-393-8238) or Jackie Martin (217-393-8237).

“This contest really promotes the best our local businesses have to offer,” Martin said.

So get out there and nominate!

Mike Goebel is the Managing Editor of The News-Gazette. Reach him by email at mgoebel@news-gazette.com or by phone at 217-393-8254.
As business role models go, DEREK PETERSON can’t think of one any finer than the campus legend they named a school spirit award after.

“The one and only Lou Liay,” Peterson says. “Not only is Lou an impressive Illini, he has an energy and work ethic that I tip my hat to. His past successes with the Alumni Association and his constant ability to bring people together for a greater good are truly inspiring. Lou Liay is one of a kind.”

The same could be said about the place Peterson has reported for work the past 16 years — Allerton Park, where he started as a park attendant in 2006 and, 12 years later, where he was elevated to executive director.

The UI horticulture grad and native of the small Henry County farming community of Alpha took time to answer questions in our speed read spotlighting leaders of organizations big and small.

I’m frugal in that … I always drive very used cars. I view transportation as a necessity; cars are just tools to get from one spot to another. My current car, a 2006 Toyota Prius, has 230,000 miles and cost me about $1,000. I also had to clean out the seller’s rain gutters, but I think I got a pretty good deal.
Three adjectives I hope my staff would use to describe me are … inspiring, hard-working and honest.

On my office walls, you’ll find … an Allerton quilt made by my mom and a Father’s Day photo from my kids. However, these days my office isn’t really in one place, as I move around Allerton to be more accessible — so depending on the day, my background might be a painting of Robert Allerton in the Butternut Room, the mural in the Greenhouse Café or the oaks of the Sangamon River valley.

My philosophy on meetings is … they are very valuable. Maybe I haven’t been in many bad meetings, but I find collaboration really important.

Meetings are a great way to keep up with all the parts of an organization, bringing people together to hear different voices and opinions. Allerton is physically spread out so it’s helpful to gather people in the same spot to speak plainly about things.

I have changed meeting structure over the years in both style and participants — it’s probably good to keep things fresh.

The hardest thing about being a leader is … you have to learn to be an expert juggler, and you don’t always get to choose the tasks you juggle.

My single favorite moment of all-time in this job was … just this past year when we gathered the entire staff at Allerton in one room and spoke about all of the accomplishments we have had over the past 10 years.

Through this reflection, you could feel the pride building in the room; we recognized individual efforts that had built the successes for our entire team. There was hope in a time when hope felt like a distant thing.

It was a beautiful moment and I was lucky to be a part of it.

I can’t live without my … family. They provide the support, inspiration and structure that keeps me grounded and successful.

If I could trade places for a week with any other business person in town, I wouldn’t mind switching with … Chris Harlan at the U of I Community Credit Union. That organization has partnered with Allerton on different events for over 10 years and I always love working with Chris and his entire team. They make their work look easy and fun, although I’m sure it’s not always easy.
My one unbreakable rule of the workplace is … don’t stop moving forward. Life is one stumble after another, but if you can keep a growth mindset and not lose hope, you won’t fail.

I wind down after work by … cooking dinner, taking the kids to the library, being the assistant coach for my daughter’s soccer team and trying to fit in as much time with my family as I can.

The last luxury in which I indulged was … buying an old boat. I’m talking older than me by about 10 years.

The outboard broke the first weekend we took it out, so I have spent the winter becoming a semi-expert at rebuilding the transmission on a 1970 60 HP Johnson outboard. I’m not sure that counts as a luxury, though.

The most beneficial college class I took was … Turf Management at U of I. Not because I wanted to work at a golf course, but because it was taught by my advisor and later boss at Allerton, Bruce Branham.

As a student, Bruce was a wonderful resource and went out of his way to help me gain a scholarship. As a boss, he continued to mentor me through many facets of my life. Bruce is a wonderful guy.

I’m up and at ’em every day by … 5:30 to 6 a.m. I sleep in during the winter months, but throughout the summer it’s harder for me to stay in bed after the sun is up.

My exercise routine consists of … walking three to five times per week. I like long, brisk walks at night. I do the same route every night so I can zone out and clear my head.

The worst job I ever had … is hard to choose. I really enjoy working, and have found a lot of success and friendship through it. I suppose the ones I liked least always had to do with swine or hay baling, which I did often as a teen. I would consider baling hay to be the most difficult as we would bale small rectangle bales. I liked being on the rack, but I hated being in the loft.

On a 1-to-10 scale, the impact of the pandemic has been a … 6. Allerton has been a mixed bag. We have outdoor space and I have an impressive staff who were eager to fill it with events and creativity. We learned a lot about ourselves during those long months and years, and I think we have come out stronger as a team. While there is no normal routine to return to, as too much has changed, we are rebuilding cautiously and excited about what the future holds.

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Before the weekly staff meeting starts, a co-worker brings cupcakes into the room, and a rousing, albeit off-key, rendition of “Happy Birthday” begins. The next thing you know, 30 minutes have passed, and the meeting hasn’t even started. Team bonding has occurred, but 30 minutes of productivity are gone.

A casual conversation takes place with a co-worker in the kitchen, and 15 minutes of productivity is lost.

Your cubemate just got back from a fabulous vacation, and you engage in 25 minutes of vacation stories while you scan through pictures. Then, to further waste time, there’s Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Tik Tok. Let’s face it, the internet itself is a workplace time-suck.

Discussions of a four-day work week are trending. The theory is that reducing the work week by one day — but not reducing the productivity requirement — gives people an incentive to automatically minimize inefficiencies on their own. This helps them relieve mental stress — and job satisfaction increases.

The Great Resignation, an aging workforce and more jobs than people have pushed some companies and countries to adopt the four-day work week to retain employees and eliminate burn-out in this post-COVID world. A four-day work week may seem like a radical idea. But is it? Or is this a case of “we’ve always done it this way?”

In 2016, the Bureau of Labor Statistics conducted a study of over 2,000 workers to analyze workplace productivity. Its conclusion: workers are only productive for 3 to 3½ hours. That’s not just due to “big” things like celebrating a co-worker’s birthday. The study found that, on average, employees spend 17 minutes simply making hot drinks. Based on this study, Americans conduct just 17.5 hours of productive work during their 40 hours.

How did we arrive at 40 hours as the magic number in the first place? People worked from dawn to dusk during the Industrial Revolution, often six days, and easily logged 70 hours a week.

We can trace the 40-hour week to Henry Ford. In the 1920s, he adopted the 8½-hour workday, not as a benefit but as a strategy to run his operations around the clock. By the time the Great Depression took hold, the government was actively seeking a shorter work week to combat massive unemployment challenges. The reasoning was that employers could spread the work among more people if the shifts were shorter. By 1940, Congress passed a series of laws, and the 40-hour work week became the norm.
It has been 82 years since a 40-hour work week was mandated, and a lot has changed. But the 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday work schedule remains universally accepted. Since the adoption of a standardized work week, we now compute information digitally and instantly. Our communication is virtual and instantaneous, and banking and financial matters are transacted immediately through technology. We all carry our computers, contacts and data in our pockets.

The legislators who embraced the 40-hour work week back in 1940 had no way of knowing the impact technological advances would make on today’s workplace. While technology has advanced our productivity, we haven’t shifted how we think regarding the time it takes to complete a day’s work.

One of the biggest hurdles in implementing the four-day work week is its equity. It is unlikely to be a commonly accepted way of life unless the government intervenes again as it has in the past.

Pockets of U.S. companies will launch a shortened schedule and, in many cases, might be very successful. But the reality is that a four-day work week lends itself mainly to white-collar office work. Industries like food service, manufacturing and healthcare will have a more challenging time scaling employees down to four days because of the nature of their work.

A four-day work week would also be challenging for other industries that serve the public. By executing a universal four-day work week (for the sectors that can offer it), will we unintentionally reduce the talent pipeline for jobs that do not provide it? Are workers more likely to seek out employment in jobs that have a perceived “greater work-life balance?” Studies have proven that productivity wanes after three workdays. Will it diminish even earlier if the week becomes shorter?

There is no easy answer to whether 40 is the optimal number of work hours during a week. Businesses will continue to drive employment trends as they compete for talent. Industry sectors will adopt and embrace the four-day work week, but it will be done in silos across the country.

What seems clear, though, is that short of a governmental mandate, the 40-hour work week is here to stay (at least for the time being).

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Laura Wei, President and CEO of the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce, writes for Central Illinois Business magazine. Email her at LauraW@champaigncounty.org.

**BUILDING PERMITS**

The following building permits have been issued recently by Champaign County and incorporated jurisdictions of Champaign, Mahomet, Rantoul, Savoy, St. Joseph, Tolono and Urbana. The Mahomet permits listed have been applied for but not yet approved.

In Champaign, Rantoul, Savoy and Urbana, only permits for all commercial and industrial work and all new single-family and multifamily residences and all residential remodeling exceeding $25,000 are listed. Permits are listed by applicant, description of work, location and — when available — estimated cost of improvements.

**CHAMPAIGN**

Gaylord Swisher, Green Street Realty, commercial expansion at 3402 Mission Drive, $89,948.

Motif LLC, 512 Stoughton Series, window replacements at 512 Stoughton St., $56,600.

KAP Architecture, LLC, Regency Consolidated Residential, apartment construction at 4505 Legends Drive, $20,600,394.

KAP Architecture, LLC, Regency Consolidated Residential, apartment construction at 4413 Legends Drive, $20,600,394.

Wells and Wells Construction, Regency Consolidated Residential, bicycle storage building construction at 4413 Legends Drive, $136,963.

Wells and Wells Construction, Regency Consolidated Residential, bicycle storage building construction at 4405 Legends Drive, $136,864.

Apex Design Building, LSH Capital LLC, footing and foundation dental office at 2910 Crossing Court. Cost not available.

Halbeck Homes, Inc., single-family dwelling at 1616 Crabapple Lane, $675,000.

American Deck & Sunroom, Aziz and Amy Ahmed, new partially covered deck at 1608 Sandcherry Court, $82,000.

Storage Solutions Inc., Caterpillar Logistics, Inc., mezzanine system for storage at 102 S. Duncan Road, $99,993.

JSM Development Services, LLC, Island Management, JSM leasing office renovation at 616 E. Green St., $290,790.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3804 Obadiah Drive, $330,900.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3807 Obadiah Drive, $320,900.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3811 Obadiah Drive, $326,903.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3901 Obadiah Drive, $330,900.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3906 Obadiah Drive, $330,900.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3908 Obadiah Drive, $330,900.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3909 Obadiah Drive, $330,900.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3911 Obadiah Drive, $326,903.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3916 Obadiah Drive, $330,900.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3980 Obadiah Drive, $320,900.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3989 Obadiah Drive, $330,900.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3995 Obadiah Drive, $330,900.

TK Homes of II, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3999 Obadiah Drive, $1,768,500.

ServPro of Champaign-Urbana, Randy Trinar, replace fire-damaged floor joists at 2004 Lynwood Drive, $57,898.

Palmetto Solar, Jose Ruiz, rooftop solar at 2806 Carrelton Drive, $35,000.

Legacy Solar, LLC, Prasanna Padmanaban, rooftop solar at 1711 Eagle Road, $35,000.

Legacy Solar, LLC, Bing Zahn and Jingwen Qin, rooftop solar at 703 Bardeen Ln., $30,000.

New Prairie Construction, Jeffrey and Robin Hamilton, rooftop solar at 5003 Trey Blvd., $27,209.

Copper Creek Contractors, Debra and Ronald Bailey, tenant space expansion at 2522 Village Green Place, $58,000.

Wingle Construction, Inc., Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, ADM offices at 1907 S. Fourth St., $338,468.

Andrew Fell Arch & Design, Shree Kuber Inc., remodel and storage room addition at 406 N. Prospect Ave., $138,000.

Timbercreek Developers, new single-family dwelling at 1416 Jacobs Blvd., $550,000.

Timbercreek Developers, new single-family dwelling at 1414 Jacobs Blvd., $595,000.

Legacy Solar, Klaus Skreinber, rooftop solar at 410 Yalow Drive, $52,217.

Sub 4 Development Company, LLC, The Carle Foundation, Hickory River build-out at 3514 Fields South Drive, $400,000.

Ouyu Yuan, Doug Larson, restaurant remodel at 112 E. Green St., $29,100.

Santosha Inc., Planned Parenthood, building construction at 302 Stoughton St., $1,766,500.

Architectural Expressions, 2916 Crossing Court, LLC, office remodel for Next Up Assets at 2909 W. von Hoening Ct., $70,000.

IUVO Constructum, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3808 Obadiah Drive, $330,900.

Legacy Solar, LLC, Timothy Mininger, garage rooftop solar array at 1710 Coronado Drive, $28,242.

Smith/Buttget Architects, Atenaehum Blvd., exterior stair, ramp and retaining wall at 306 W. Church St., $99,140.

Mackey Mitchell Architects, Sam RHQ Housing, fraternity remodeling at 301 E. Armory Ave., $1,725,500.

Janna Hagensick, apartment remodels at 608 E. White St., $118,000.

KAP Architecture, LLC, Regency Consolidated Residential, The Landing at Legends maintenance building at 4403 Legends Drive, $429,531.

KAP Architecture, LLC, Regency Consolidated Residential, new addition for The Landing at Legends Clubhouse at 4503 Legends Drive, $2,089,762.

Franzen Construction Group, LLC, KGP LLC, demolish apartment building at 1418 Lincolnshire Drive, $322,000.

IUVO Constructum, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 3811 Obadiah Drive, $330,900.

Premier Homes of Illinois, Inc., new single-family dwelling at 4814 Oakdale Drive, $498,000.

TK Homes of Illinois, LLC, basement finish at 3908 Obadiah Drive, $30,000.

Coach House, Julie and Richard Dietrich, new garage at 815 W. Columbia Ave., $34,000.

Straight Up Solar, Fortress, CMI One, rooftop solar at 401 S. Chestnut St., $200,000.

Starr Limousine, remodel at 231 S. Staley Road, Bldg. K, $51,000.

Wingle Construction, Inc., Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, ADM innovative lab at 1907 S. Fourth St., $536,937.

Duzan Architecture and Design, Inc., 1st floor apartment remodels at 1006 S. Third St., $94,000.

Straight Up Solar, Fortress, CMI One, rooftop solar at 400-402 S. Chestnut St., $80,400.

Duzan Architecture and Design, Adams Properties, new garage at 2002 Hudson Drive, $25,000.
URBANA
C-U Under Construction, Inc., Katelyn Williams, window replacement at 2810 East Castlerock Drive, $15,800.
Armstrong Builders, Paul Phillips, new single-family dwelling at 2822 East Stone Creek Blvd., $320,000.
Kennedy Builders, Michael Kennedy, new single-family dwelling at 2813 South Wadsworth Lane, $395,000.
TAG Residential LLC, Kevin Brumback, new single-family dwelling at 2847 South Muirfield Place, $327,000.
TAG Residential LLC, Kevin Brumback, new single-family dwelling at 2863 South Muirfield Place, $327,000.
TAG Residential LLC, Kevin Brumback, new single-family dwelling at 2865 South Muirfield Place, $327,000.
TAG Residential LLC, Kevin Brumback, new single-family dwelling at 2869 South Muirfield Place, $327,000.
TAG Residential LLC, Kevin Brumback, new single-family dwelling at 2871 South Muirfield Place, $327,000.
TAG Residential LLC, Kevin Brumback, new single-family dwelling at 2875 South Muirfield Place, $327,000.
TAG Residential LLC, Kevin Brumback, new single-family dwelling at 2879 South Muirfield Place, $327,000.
TAG Residential LLC, Kevin Brumback, new single-family dwelling at 2881 South Muirfield Place, $327,000.
TAG Residential LLC, Kevin Brumback, new single-family dwelling at 2883 South Muirfield Place, $327,000.
Freedom Roofing and Construction, Joe Waller, roof replacement at 1202 N. Busey Ave., $10,122.
Joe Waller, roof replacement at 1202 N. Busey Ave., $10,122.
Taylor Construction and Design, Wes Taylor, new single-family residence at 3406 S. Myra Ridge Drive, $161,600.
Petry-Kuhn Co., alteration/renovation/remodel, commercial building at 611 W. Park St., $384,530.
East Central Illinois Service Group, Aaron Haunhorst, alteration/renovation/remodel, commercial building at 1812 N. Federal Drive, $104,602.
Bash & Schrock, Inc., Gary Schrock, new single-family dwelling at 601 N. Abbey Road, $316,916.
Jadco Installations, Inc., alteration/renovation/remodel, commercial building at 904 N. Division Ave., $35,000.
Heartstone Homes, Keith Harris, new single-family residence at 704 N. Abbey Road, $220,400.
Logan Fiessner, new single-family dwelling at 2704 N. Somerset Drive, $32,000.
David Huber, alteration/remodel at 802 E. Washington St., $215,000.
Taylor Construction and Design, LLC, David Taylor, new single-family dwelling at 1707 E. Hillshire Drive, $157,100.
Taylor Construction and Design, LLC, David Taylor, new single-family dwelling at 1703 E. Hillshire Drive, $157,100.
Taylor Construction and Design, LLC, David Taylor, new single-family dwelling at 1705 E. Hillshire Drive, $157,100.
Phase I Consulting, Jim Moser, commercial at 1201 W. Kenyon Road, Unit A, $35,000.
Heartstone Homes, Keith Harris, new single-family dwelling at 2503 N. Skyline Drive, $197,400.

SAVOY
New construction single family at 504 Denton Drive, $275,000.
New construction single family at 412 Sutton St., $400,000.
Commercial remodel at 1809 Woodfield Drive, $400,000.
New construction single family at 106 Summerbrook Drive, $350,000.
New construction single family at 104 Shiloh Drive, $350,000.
New construction single family at 116 Shiloh Drive, $350,000.
New construction single family at 117 Shiloh Drive, $350,000.
New construction single family at 412 Sutton St., $400,000.
New construction single family at 909 Declaration Drive, $630,000.
New construction exhaust removal system at 106 W. Tomaras, $73,446.
Basement finish at 112 Gallardo St., $35,000.
New construction single family at 5 Lancaster Ct., $595,000.

MAHOMET
Stephens Homes, single-family detached at 1309 Ravenwood Drive, $300,000.
Signature Construction, Inc., single-family detached at 1307 Ravenwood Drive, $500,000.
Unlimited Construction & Development, Inc., single-family attached at 620 Rapp Drive, $200,000.
Unlimited Construction & Development, Inc., single-family attached at 622 Rapp Drive, $200,000.
Unlimited Construction & Development, Inc., single-family attached at 624 Rapp Drive, $200,000.
Unlimited Construction & Development, Inc., single-family detached at 626 Rapp Drive, $200,000.
Unlimited Construction & Development, Inc., single-family detached at 628 Rapp Drive, $200,000.
Unlimited Construction & Development, Inc., single-family detached at 630 Rapp Drive, $200,000.
Unlimited Construction & Development, Inc., single-family detached at 633 Rapp Drive, $200,000.
Unlimited Construction & Development, Inc., single-family detached at 634 Rapp Drive, $200,000.
Unlimited Construction & Development, Inc., single-family detached at 636 Rapp Drive, $200,000.

MONTICELLO
Barbara and Eric Cook, addition at 401 S. Cottage Grove Ave., $195,000.
Petry-Kuhn Co., commercial, at 611 W. Park St., $384,530.
Taylor Construction and Design, LLC, David Taylor, new single-family at 1707 E. Hillshire Drive, $157,100.

RANTOUL
Imperial Exterior Construction, roofing at 118 E. Borman Ave., $35,000.
Honest Abe Roofing, Travis Benison, roofing at 816 Roseyn, $32,920.
Matt Rice Const., Inc, Newt Investments, residential renovation and alterations at 1308 Rockland, $32,000.
Matt Rice Const., Inc, Newt Investments, residential renovation and alterations at 1821 Eater, $65,000.

MONTICELLO
Tatman Village, new house at 2000 E. Washington, $550,000.
Blair and Caitlyn Ross, addition to house at 902 Robert Webb, $50,000.
Steve and Lana Cheek, addition/remodel at 2007 Macintosh Lane, $28,540.

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Hutchcraft Van Service, Inc.
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Normal, IL 61761
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### Consumer price index

The CPI measures average price changes of goods and services over time, with a reference base of 100 in 1982-84. To put into context, a current CPI of 194.5 means a market basket of goods and services that cost $100 in 1982-84 now costs $194.50.

### Amtrak total monthly riders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Feb. 2022</th>
<th>March 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington-Normal</td>
<td>12,057</td>
<td>16,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champaign-Urbana</td>
<td>10,647</td>
<td>15,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mattoon</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>1,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rantoul</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Weekly grain prices

Prices for grain crops for the week of April 18, 2022. Figures are for this week and the percentage change compared with a year ago.

- C.I. Corn (b) 7.66 ▲ 31.7%
- C.I. Soybean (b) 16.62 ▲ 15.6%
- C.I. 48% Soybean Meal, Rail (t) 481.90 ▲ 21.7%
- Hard Red Winter Wheat (b) 11.62 ▲ 82.2%
- Truck to Kansas City
- Dark Northern Spring Wheat (b) 14% MN, Rail 13.27 ▲ 64.2%
- Soft White Wheat Portland (b) 11.23 ▲ 66.3%
- Sorghum, Kansas City (100 wt.) Rail 7.62 ▲ 28.2%

### Prices at the pump

Average price per gallon of regular unleaded gas as of April 19, 2022.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>April '22</th>
<th>April '21</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington-Normal</td>
<td>$4.21</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champaign-Urbana</td>
<td>$4.30</td>
<td>$3.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>$4.77</td>
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<td>Danville</td>
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<td>$2.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decatur</td>
<td>$4.12</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>$4.35</td>
<td>$3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>$4.10</td>
<td>$2.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hotel/motel statistics

Total amount of revenue generated in Champaign and Urbana by hotels and motels for room rentals only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL REVENUE</th>
<th>February '22</th>
<th>January '22</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$237,789</td>
<td>$223,691</td>
<td>▲ 6.30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANNUAL TOTALS</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$266,906</td>
<td>$461,480</td>
<td>▲ 72.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Unemployment rates for Central Illinois counties, state and nation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Labor Force</th>
<th>Jobless</th>
<th>Dec. '21</th>
<th>Nov. '21</th>
<th>Dec. '20</th>
<th>Change Month</th>
<th>Change Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>114,850</td>
<td>4,367</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>▼ -0.4</td>
<td>▼ -1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coles</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<td>▼ -1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>9,923</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>▼ -0.2</td>
<td>▼ -0.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edgar</td>
<td>8,317</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>▼ -0.3</td>
<td>▼ -1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ford</td>
<td>6,158</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>▼ -0.3</td>
<td>▼ -1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iroquois</td>
<td>12,973</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<td>▼ -1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macouen</td>
<td>45,712</td>
<td>2,831</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>▼ -0.3</td>
<td>▼ -2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLean</td>
<td>83,212</td>
<td>3,034</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>▼ -0.3</td>
<td>▼ -1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moultrie</td>
<td>7,266</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>▼ -0.3</td>
<td>▼ -1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piatt</td>
<td>8,541</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>▼ -0.2</td>
<td>▼ -1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermilion</td>
<td>31,662</td>
<td>1,634</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>▼ -0.3</td>
<td>▼ -1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>351,208</td>
<td>14,498</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>▼ -0.3</td>
<td>▼ -1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>6,111,494</td>
<td>322,107</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>▼ -0.3</td>
<td>▼ -2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>163,725,000</td>
<td>6,782,000</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>▼ -0.3</td>
<td>▼ -2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Source

- U.S. Department of Labor
- USDA Livestock & Grain Market News
- aaa.com
- Cities of Champaign and Urbana
University of Illinois flash index

**What is the flash index?**

The flash index is an early indicator of the Illinois economy’s expected performance. It is a weighted average of Illinois growth rates in corporate earnings, consumer spending and personal income. An index above 100 indicates expected economic growth; an index below 100 indicates the economy is contracting.

Source: Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois

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Champaign County retail sales collections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>$21,169,808.79</td>
<td>$16,177,806</td>
<td>$17,255,397</td>
<td>$17,088,725</td>
<td>$16,520,654</td>
<td>$16,365,053</td>
<td>▲ 29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahomet</td>
<td>$1,168,075.53</td>
<td>$803,904</td>
<td>$735,564</td>
<td>$761,147</td>
<td>$698,876</td>
<td>$618,235</td>
<td>▲ 88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philo</td>
<td>$150,664.38</td>
<td>$110,493</td>
<td>$105,128</td>
<td>$111,841</td>
<td>$89,842</td>
<td>$86,370</td>
<td>▲ 74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rantoul</td>
<td>$1,890,124.30</td>
<td>$1,595,889</td>
<td>$1,525,491</td>
<td>$1,435,536</td>
<td>$1,375,921</td>
<td>$1,390,511</td>
<td>▲ 35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savoy</td>
<td>$2,819,845.62</td>
<td>$2,414,976</td>
<td>$2,323,105</td>
<td>$2,434,367</td>
<td>$2,292,820</td>
<td>$2,326,158</td>
<td>▲ 21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>$316,934.00</td>
<td>$241,633</td>
<td>$235,632</td>
<td>$239,371</td>
<td>$224,224</td>
<td>$206,971</td>
<td>▲ 53.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolono</td>
<td>$224,679.43</td>
<td>$172,196</td>
<td>$152,373</td>
<td>$198,891</td>
<td>$171,404</td>
<td>$152,498</td>
<td>▲ 47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbana</td>
<td>$6,584,831.41</td>
<td>$5,478,433</td>
<td>$5,584,667</td>
<td>$5,210,233</td>
<td>$5,026,102</td>
<td>$5,012,534</td>
<td>▲ 31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unincorporated</td>
<td>$1,489,034.06</td>
<td>$1,089,562</td>
<td>$1,371,459</td>
<td>$1,427,403</td>
<td>$1,350,949</td>
<td>$1,185,550</td>
<td>▲ 25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County total</td>
<td>$35,813,998</td>
<td>$28,084,892</td>
<td>$29,288,815</td>
<td>$28,907,515</td>
<td>$27,750,792</td>
<td>$27,343,880</td>
<td>▲ 31.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latest statistics available from Illinois Department of Revenue
At CIBM Bank you’ll find that we have a strong commitment of collaboration in providing financial services that help you achieve your financial goals. We understand that whether you are just opening your first business account or looking for a better loan option, you want a bank you can trust to deliver the best solutions for your needs, not the best solutions for the bank.

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---

### Home sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>March '22</th>
<th>March '21</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>▼ -23.9%</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>▼ -7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coles</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>▲ 32.5%</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>▲ 34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>▲ 22.2%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>▲ 39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>▲ 20.0%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>▲ 37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>▲ 9.1%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>▲ 12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>▼ -19.0%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>▼ -3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macon</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>▼ -12.1%</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>▼ -8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLean</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>▼ -18.8%</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>▼ -6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moultrie</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>▲ 160.0%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>▲ 137.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piatt</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>▼ -32.1%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>▼ -9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermilion</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>▲ 42.1%</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>▲ 9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>13,748</td>
<td>15,134</td>
<td>▼ -9.2%</td>
<td>34,113</td>
<td>35,502</td>
<td>▼ -3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Median sales price**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March '22</th>
<th>March '21</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$180,000</td>
<td>$167,750</td>
<td>▲ 7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,500</td>
<td>$95,000</td>
<td>▼ -4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$116,750</td>
<td>$121,750</td>
<td>▼ -4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$78,000</td>
<td>▼ -3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000</td>
<td>$102,000</td>
<td>▼ -11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$108,000</td>
<td>$115,000</td>
<td>▼ -6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$105,000</td>
<td>$101,000</td>
<td>▲ 4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$185,500</td>
<td>$159,450</td>
<td>▲ 16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$85,000</td>
<td>$117,750</td>
<td>▼ -27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$161,000</td>
<td>$148,500</td>
<td>▲ 8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$84,250</td>
<td>$84,500</td>
<td>▼ 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$249,000</td>
<td>$235,000</td>
<td>▲ 6.0%</td>
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</table>

Source: Illinois Association of Realtors

---

### Willard Airport passenger totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly totals</th>
<th>March '22</th>
<th>March '21</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enplanements</td>
<td>5,563</td>
<td>3,652</td>
<td>▲ 52.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YTD totals</td>
<td>13,198</td>
<td>8,122</td>
<td>▲ 62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual totals</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enplanements</td>
<td>56,728</td>
<td>35,874</td>
<td>▲ 58.1%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Primary Mortgage Market Survey**

Freddie Mac surveys lenders each week on the rates, fees and points for the most popular mortgage products. The following are the average rates for the week of April 14, 2022, for the U.S. and for the North Central region, which includes Illinois, and the average rates for the U.S. one year ago.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mortgage type</th>
<th>U.S. April '22</th>
<th>U.S. April '21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-year fixed</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>3.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-year fixed</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/1-year adjustable</td>
<td>3.69%</td>
<td>2.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp.

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For these three businesses in Champaign, it's all relative.

Have a family business we should know about, email CIB Editor Mike Goebel at mgoebel@news-gazette.com.
ALL IN THE FAMILY

For these three businesses in Champaign, it’s all relative.

Have a family business we should know about, email CIB Editor Mike Goebel at mgoebel@news-gazette.com.

Dad Kenneth Shelby with his daughters, from left, Kennetra Shelby, Kiara and Karidia.

IN THE FAMILY

in Champaign, it’s all relative.

CIB Editor Mike Goebel at mgoebel@news-gazette.com.
Kiara Shelby talks about her family’s business, Shelby’s Cigar & Daiquiri Lounge, in Champaign on March 31.
Kennetra Shelby has a love for daiquiris. Her father, Kenneth, has a love for cigars. And they share a dream.

“We both wanted to start our own individual businesses,” Kennetra said. “Then we started talking about combining the two and collaborating together.”

What they ended up with was Shelby’s Cigar & Daiquiri Lounge at 1724 W. Bradley Ave. in Champaign.

Kennetra started researching opening her own daiquiri bar in 2019 and Kenneth was always on the lookout for a cigar lounge on his travels.

“I would always stop in and check them out,” he said. “I learned more about them and started researching it and decided I wanted to open my own place.”

When he heard about a vacant space on West Bradley Avenue, he called Kennetra.

“I think we have the perfect place
that will work and we can combine the two,” he told her.

In November, Shelby’s Cigar & Daiquiri Lounge opened for special occasions. The Lounge is open four days a week, beginning at 5 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays and 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

“It’s not a club,” Kennetra says. “It’s a social environment for people to enjoy. You are coming into a chill atmosphere. It’s almost like a ‘Cheers’ atmosphere where everybody knows each other. It’s like stepping out of your living room, but still feeling comfortable enough as if you are in your own living room. If you are looking for a party atmosphere, the Lounge wouldn’t be for you. But if you are looking to socialize, hear chill music, drink good daiquiris, enjoy hookahs and cigars, this place is perfect. You can go in sweat pants or you can get dressed up. Either way, you won’t feel out of place.”

Helping out Kennetra and Kenneth are Kennetra’s two sisters, Kiara Shelby and Karidia Shelby.

“We all have K’s,” Kennetra said. “That started with my Mom, Karla with a K. Then, of course, my dad is Kenneth and so when they had us, they just continued.”

Kennetra says her vision for the lounge reflects her personality.

“I am still young, but I have an old soul and I like to go places where you can just chill and relax,” she said. “I am not a big drinker and I have found that daiquiris are more mild and relaxing. It doesn’t give you that instant drunk sensation and that is what drove me to daiquiris.”

Kenneth is intrigued by a good cigar and enjoys doing research.

“First of all, I think you look cool smoking a cigar,” he said. “You just do. The more I learned about them and the process of how they make them and flavor them, I became more and more intrigued. Now, I just love sitting down with someone, enjoying a cigar and talking about them. I like the flavored-type cigars. The world has changed a lot over the years and they taste better and very relaxing.”

Smoking in places with a liquor license was outlawed as of Jan. 1, 2008, but patrons are able to smoke outside. The ultimate goal of the Shelbys is to build a standalone building
and add a patio. Work is continuing on the inside of the Lounge to satisfy local codes, Kenneth added.

Kennetra’s love of daiquiris has inspired her to come up with some new recipes of her own.

“I have a vendor that I use for flavors, but I do mix up my own as well,” she said. “I kind of create my own taste and flavors out of different combinations.”

The menu choices include approximately 20 drinks including “Love Spell,” a grape-flavored drink, “Secret Lovers,” which features watermelon flavor, and “Don’t get Cute,” a raspberry mango margarita. All come with your choice of clear or dark liquor.

While business is picking up, Kenneth says the fact that he gets to work alongside his three daughters is payment enough.

“I love working with my family and that is the most enjoyable thing I have gotten out of this experience,” Kenneth said. “To be able to spend quality time with my daughters and being able to learn about starting a business and watch them learn about it at the same time, is something very special. It has given us a chance to spend a lot of quality time together and it has brought us closer.”

Kenneth says even his focus has changed since the lounge opened. At first, he was interested in starting a business, a place he could develop into a place he and other cigar-lovers could enjoy. He still wants that, of course.

“But now, we are doing it for the love of each other in this family,” he said. “We have gotten in tune with one another and enjoy that quality time together. Even when one of us can’t go down to the lounge or do something, we call and somebody is willing to step up. And now, our grandkids are able to come and help out and do things like clean up after an event. That for me is the most important thing. We started off looking at it as business, but now it developed has developed into more of something for the family where we spend so much quality time with each other.”

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Illini Mattress Co.

‘It is pretty much all in the family’

STORY Kevin Barlow    PHOTOS Robiln Scholz

He doesn’t have to, but Ed Stout still works every single day of the week.

“That’s my choice,” says the president and owner of Illini Mattress at 514 S. Country Fair Dr. in. “I don’t see retirement coming anytime soon, either. As long as my health is good, I enjoy working with people too much.”

He has been that way since 1990 when he opened Illini Mattress, a one-man business at the time.

“I waited on customers and if they bought something, I would bill them, and then at night, deliver it to them,” he said.

Ed, who was born and raised in Champaign, first became involved in the bedding industry in the early 1970s while working with his brother as a factory direct store making their own brand of mattresses.

Family was important then, and it’s important now. He is joined at work these days by his daughter Kristin; son Mike; and wife, Jan, who works from home most days.

“Family businesses are unique, but it has worked out well for me with my wife, son and daughter,” he said. “It is pretty much all in the family. I even have my grandkids working here now and that is very special.”

Kristin has worked at Illini Mattress for 25 years.

“I didn’t know that this is what I wanted to do,” she admits. “But I began to realize the value of a family business when I was in my late teens and early 20s. I love it and wouldn’t change anything.”

Illini Mattress is an authorized dealer of
The Stout family has run Illini Mattress since 1990 including, front row from left, Ed Stout, Kristin Stout Blackwell, Jan Stout, Justin Blackwell and Michael Stout. They’re joined by employees, back row, from left, Richard Witt, Myles Roosevelt, Braxton Gladney and Cole Board.
Justin Blackwell, son of owner Kristen Blackwell, imitates the poster behind him at Illini Mattress Co. in Champaign.
Tempur-Pedic, Sealy, Sealy Posturpedic, Sealy Posturpedic Hybrid, Optimum, and Stearns and Foster. They also offer electric adjustable bases, futon mattresses and covers, waterbed replacement items, and a selection of pillows, sheets, mattress pads and headboards.

Professional delivery and installation is available for most products.

Ed was slow to advance into the computer age, preferring the pencil and notepad to a computer, but he eventually came around.

“I’m old school but you have to adapt with the industry and the changes as well,” he said.

Now, the company’s website features over one million items with a selection that constantly changes.

He is proud of the website but also proud of the relationships he has built with customers since 1991.

“We have a lot of repeat business and word gets around,” he said. “When people are happy they talk. When they are unhappy, they talk. So you have to keep people happy because word-of-mouth business is still important.”

Ed says that over the years, he has made adjustments, cutting back some on the 12-hour days he was proud to be at work, but admits the past two years are unlike anything he has ever seen.

“We went through some crazy times with the COVID and then the supply chain issues started and we are still going...
through an adjustment period,” he said. “I thought I had seen everything.”

But, there is no place he would rather be.

“I still enjoy coming to work and especially now, with the family so involved in it,” he said. “It’s one thing to start a business and work for yourself. But it means so much more to keep a business running and work with your family.”

And there is also a secret to his success, he says.

“It can be challenging, but we have a great family relationship,” he said. “We work together and don’t have too many arguments. As long as I agree with my girls, that is. That’s the key.”

Kristin said Dad makes it easy on them.

“He has led by example the entire time,” she said. “We don’t have quotas or anything like that. We just talk with people and help them find what they want as opposed to sell them something they don’t need. That’s the way he has always done it and that’s what he taught us when we came to work here.”

While Kristin holds her family in high regard, she also loves the customers.

“We are really thankful for our client base,” she said. “We have an outstanding group of clients and a lot of loyalty which isn’t very common these days. We are very fortunate there and don’t take that for granted. It’s so nice to be able to be yourself and be genuine and actually care about people and meet their needs.”

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As a second-grader, 7-year-old Mark Whitsitt never had a good answer when asked what he wanted to be when he grew up. “What kid says at Show and Tell that he wants to be a real estate appraiser?” he says now, who waited until 2006 as a fully grown adult to become a residential appraiser. “Nobody says real estate appraiser. Even later in high school, I understood what it was, but my friends didn’t. It didn’t sound all that glamorous to say my Dad measures houses and businesses and puts a value on them.”
While in college, Mark still didn’t have the passion for it, even though his father, Stephen, had founded Whitsitt & Associates, which to this day offers a broad cross section of real estate appraisal services including commercial/industrial, residential, relocation, eminent domain, and even as an expert witness for trials.

Once Mark got into college, he took a job at a retail store, but Stephen had a vision.

“My appraisal needs were growing and there is nobody as trustworthy as family,” Stephen said. “I saw an opportunity that would help both of us. I thought the ceiling at his job was low, but working for me, it would be much higher. It would also allow him to complete his college education and begin a solid career.”

Still, Mark wasn’t sold. He envisioned a career in real estate and started taking classes to become a Realtor.

“Then Dad said, ‘Hang on a second,’” Mark added. “I can’t let you go into real estate without at least trying what I do. If you hate it, fine, you can be a Realtor or anything you want, but I want you to at least try what I do.”

When he tried, something clicked and he saw a side of it that had escaped him as a youngster.

“We would go to lunch and we would walk through these restaurants and have to stop five or six times for him to say hello to bankers, former clients or whoever,” Mark explained. “I was a 20-something kid just getting started and it was like my dad was a rock star in a lot of ways. But I learned that he got that kind of reception and response because of the hard work and the reputation he had built.”

Now Mark is well on his way to building on his reputation.

“It’s challenging,” he added. “To be an appraiser, it might sound boring. You are measuring houses and taking pictures of houses and writing 20-page reports on houses, and you compare them to other houses. But it is so much more than that. You have to have people skills and be able to interact with clients and understand what customer service means. You have to be able to interact with homeowners and build trust. They have to know that you are qualified, competent and knowledgeable enough to give them a fair market value conclusion for their home.”

Whitsitt & Associates was established in 1988 by local appraisers who recognized the need for a full-service appraisal office to serve the growing demands of Champaign-Urbana. Stephen has been an appraiser for more than 40 years, with experience in appraising commercial properties.

He has also served as an expert witness in trials and has served as an instructor at Parkland College and guest lecturer at the University of Illinois. He has written and instructed a continuing education course for the State of Illinois.

“When I graduated from college, I worked for my dad who ran Champaign Loan and Building,” Stephen said. “I started as a loan officer, but the appraisal process was very informal back in the late 1970s. An examiner suggested to my dad that they should formalize the appraisal process and have a real appraiser do the work instead of the way it was done then. I took appraisal classes and transitioned into houses, but now I just do commercial.”

Stephen says he is still learning.

“It’s true that appraisal is part art and part science,” he said. “You have to have the educational knowledge of how to handle situations and you have to understand economics and theories of finance.”

But most of all, he adds, you need common sense.

“And you need to talk with people. One of the best pieces of advice I ever received was to talk with realtors and brokers. If you talk to every broker in town, you will probably appraise the property as close to a market value as you can get.”

While Stephen still enjoys the work, it’s an even bigger joy coming to the office where two of his three sons are employed. Besides Mark, Clayton works as a member of the support staff.

“It’s a lot of fun,” Stephen adds. “As anyone who works with family in their business, you have really good days and you have some not-so-good days. It’s fun to be able to visit about family and their issues while we are here. Mark has blessed me with two granddaughters, so it makes it easier to keep tabs on them.”

Mark calls the experience of working with his brother and father “amazing.”

“Different people have different experiences and people joke about working with families being one of the hardest things you can do,” he said. “But with my dad’s personality is perfect for our office. He respects all of his employees and all three of his sons. He doesn’t micro-manage, but he guides and he has set a huge example for me moving forward.”
At both the Champaign and Urbana park districts, we aim to improve the quality of life in C-U, including that of our older participants and park visitors.

In addition to our programs and activities, our attractive parks and natural areas raise the standard of living in our neighborhoods and stimulate activity that ripples throughout the economy.

Those of us on the Age-Friendly C-U Steering Committee are continually working toward making Champaign-Urbana a more livable community for the 50-and-over set. Our committee is comprised of community members who work in transportation, public health, education, urban planning, research, senior living and parks and recreation.

When it comes to recreation, we learned more than ever in 2020 that outdoor spaces, parks and programs were important to the health of our community. During the initial closures in spring 2020, we saw vast increases of people walking, running and rolling on paths — such that at Urbana Park District we made signs about path safety and social distancing and to direct walkers to parks other than Meadowbrook Park, certainly the most visited park in Urbana.

Staff at the Urbana Park District had to use the magic word of 2020 — PIVOT — just like every business sector. We started Zoom trivia games, photo jigsaw puzzles on our Facebook page, and began Parking Lot Bingo, where attendees played from the safety of their car and honked their horn when winning. As we lessened restrictions the
following year, programs like these joined regular ones like Senior Strengtheners, Ukulele Workshops and Technology Assistance.

These and other programs that we moved outdoors, like our Senior Club Potlucks, had over 1,200 visits in 2021. Folks age 50 and older comprised 38% of the participation in Urbana Park District Community Programs in 2021, whether they registered for a class or dropped in on an unregistered activity.

Those visits in 2021 were 325 more visits than 2019, the year before COVID-19 brought in-person recreation programs to an end.

We are so pleased to see our 50-and-better patrons back in our facilities and parks! These participants are a significant portion of our program revenue.

Champaign Park District, with the Leonhard Center’s indoor track and fitness spaces, definitely sees the positive impact that exercise has on our age-friendly citizens. The center also works with Silver Sneakers to cover the cost of membership fees for adults 65 and up.

In 2021 alone, CPD had 607 active senior memberships at Leonhard with 8,207 senior membership visits. They had 414 Silver Sneaker members and 4,121 Silver Sneaker visits.

In addition to the active fitness opportunities at Leonhard Center, CPD also offers senior programming at two locations: Hays Center and Douglass Center. Hundreds of people enjoy social programs like Lunch Bunch, Ice Cream Socials, Quilting and Bunco.

Our senior participants were part of both districts’ larger story of 2020 and 2021 and we did everything we could to offer safe recreation opportunities for our citizens, particularly those 50 and up. Don’t take it from us; take it from our participants. The programs and park spaces contribute to their quality of life and most definitely improve their days.

Douglass Annex Seniors Cindy and Pete Fonner: “We love to quilt and the other quilters in the Douglass Senior Group are our favorite people to do it with. Our quilting friends at Douglass encourage and motivate us every week when we get together.”

Beverly Upshaw, president of CPD Senior Board: “I love just being around so many beautiful souls and enjoying their company. My favorite programs are quilting, movies, potlucks, and brown bag discussions.”

Urbana Park District Senior Club vice president Clif Rexroad: “I love the senior potlucks. I’ve been on several trips and it is always fun with the other seniors. I enjoy the themes we have at the potlucks and how creative we can be. Being around people and fellowshipping and the entertainment is great. I am one of the fortunate ones- I get to tell a joke sometimes and they laugh.”

Judy Miller: “I look forward to getting the newsletter and seeing all the fun activities planned. I have my calendar ready so I can add the activities I want to do, like trivia, walks in Crystal Lake Park, and the annual garden tour trip. It is fun to meet new people and see friends.”

Janet Seebke is the community program manager at Urbana Park District and Chelsea Norton is director of marketing at Champaign Park District. For information on Age-Friendly programs, visit urbanaparks.org and champaignparks.com. The authors are part of the Age-Friendly steering committee. For information, please contact Wendy Bartlo at wbartlo@illinois.edu.
At 11 years old, Candace McGregor had her entire life planned.

While babysitting her cousins one night, a disagreement developed.

“They had this amazing set of encyclopedias,” she said. “My family was a little too poor to have a set this nice, and of course we didn’t have the Internet back then. But to settle our argument, we looked in the encyclopedia and confirmed the answer.”

After the younger kids went to bed, Candace returned to the encyclopedia.

“The very next page was about pregnancy,” she said. “This story is going to make me sound like a true nerd, but I was enthralled. I just sat there reading and was just amazed at the human body and how the female body can grow another human being inside. I read about obstetricians and midwives who help women have babies and I was like ‘That’s it! That is what I am going to spend my life doing.’”

When she got home, she told the news to her mother. “I am going to deliver babies,” she said.

McGregor went on to study biology at Millikin University in Decatur, went to medical school at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine and finished her residency as an OB/GYN at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis. She has been with Christie Clinic Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology since 2009, served as the Clinic’s Chief Medical Information Officer since 2019 and was also on the Board of Directors for the past three years.

She is now the Chief Medical Officer, replacing Dr. William Pierce, who retired at the end of 2021. She is the first female CMO in Champaign-Urbana.

“There are a lot of meetings, a lot of e-mails to answer, and
a lot of strategy and decision-making to be done,” she says of her new role. “But it all centers around keeping the patient-provider relationship at the center of all that we do. We want to always continue to improve the patient experience. Our goal is to improve the health outcomes and quality of care we are providing, not only for our individual patients, but also for our community at large.”

With everything else, the cost of healthcare continues to rise.

“It’s very high and so we do what we can to reduce costs to patients for their co-pay, their deductibles and their co-insurance. Everything I do, revolved around that focus of keeping the patient-provider relationship at the center.”

The world of healthcare is ever-changing she said and added that it is harder to practice medicine in 2022 than it was when she joined Christie Clinic in 2009.

“There is a burden to see more, do more, and take care of more,” she said. “That has gotten heavier. There are insurance battles. I think government regulations and malpractice litigation interfere. We use more computers and technology, and while that is helpful it also gets in the way of that human connection between provider and patient.”

She has a supporter in Pierce.

“Dr. McGregor’s knowledge of Christie Clinic, her background and participation in various leadership roles, makes her an outstanding provider to assume the Chief Medical Officer position,” he said.

Monday through Thursday, McGregor can be found in her office, doing the tasks that go along with being a Chief Medical Officer. Fridays are different, though, or the same in a way.

“That’s my blessed day,” she said. “On Fridays, I am in the office taking care of patients and I think that is important. First, it is what I love to do. But it gives me a little street cred with the other physicians. I shouldn’t be sitting behind a desk someplace making decisions or policies that affect all of my other colleagues and not be able to submit myself to the same expectations and regulations. It also helps me keep a pulse on what the patients experience and what their concerns are.”

McGregor believes the more experiences a provider has, the more help they can be to their patient. With that in mind, during the summer of 2014, she volunteered for a month as an OB/GYN in a small rural community in Kapsowar, Kenya.

“There were limitations on what we could do, but the practice of medicine was just pure joy and it was simple. You went into the room and took care of the patient to the best of your ability. With all of the paperwork and things here, it is not nearly as joyful. We are going to keep trying to get it to that point, but that is a lot to ask.”

Her role as the first female CMO in Champaign-Urbana is not lost on her, either.

“I take that responsibility very seriously and I am so appreciative of the teachers and mentors, including Dr. Pierce, that got me to this point,” she adds. “It encourages me to advocate for other team members and patients that maybe have had biases held against them.”

After joining the clinic in 2009, McGregor was teamed with Pierce, and she credits him with developing her into her leadership role. In the six months before taking over her new role, she spent about half of her time sitting with Pierce, getting a first-hand look at how things worked.

“I learned so much from him, but there were two very key points,” she said. “One, keep in touch with humanity. Recognize that I am a human being and the people I work with are human beings and the people that we serve are human beings. And, also, every single one of them is special. The other thing I learned was the importance of upholding true values and maintaining your true character at all times.”

With a lot on her plate, McGregor doesn’t just relax when she gets home.

She is busy there, too. She is an avid gardener with an outdoor garden that is 100 feet by 50 feet. There are two greenhouses to take care of — an outdoor shaded greenhouse and an indoor heated greenhouse. And during the pandemic, she and her husband Martin, who by the way she met and started dating during that same year she decided to become an OB/GYN, planted a Christmas tree farm. They have been married for 25 years.

“I planned out my whole life when I was 11, except for the Christmas tree farm,” she said.

She is also one of the Indianapolis Colts’ biggest fans and has a goal of seeing them play in every NFL stadium. So far, she has checked 17 off the list, and has even traveled to London to see them play.

“I have the blue face paint and am a season-ticket holder,” she adds.

As for the future, McGregor says she isn’t going anywhere — and neither is Christie Clinic.

“I think there is a lot of misperception that Christie Clinic is not a independent physician-owned group or that we are looking to be sold to one of the other local hospitals,” she said. “We have been a physician-owned group for 90 years and we intend to be for another 90 years. We are continuously trying to improve our services for our patients and our community.”

Christie Clinic was founded in 1929 in Champaign by Dr. C.W. Christie, Dr. J.W. Powel, Dr. J.P. McKinney and Dr. C.E. Albers.
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