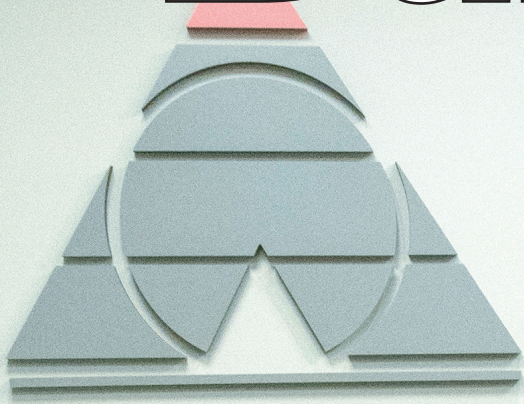


CENTRAL ILLINOIS Business



PETRY
KUHNE
C O M P A N Y

April | May 2026
news-gazette.com



BUILDING A HISTORY

Champaign-based Petry Kuhne, which traces its roots to 1904, has built some of the most well-known governmental, educational, health care structures in C-U

TOP LAWYERS

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA AREA

BASED UPON A SURVEY OF THEIR PEERS



These **LEADING LAWYERS** have been recommended by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois.

Barbra A. Webber	Barbra A Webber Attorney at Law	Champaign	217.531.1147	Family; ADR: Family
Jeffrey I. Cisco	Cisco Law PC	Champaign	217.991.0409	Crim Def: DUI; Crim Def: Felon/Misdmn; Nursing Home Neg; PI: General; Work Comp
Todd A. Bresney	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1520	Personal Injury: General
William J. Harrington	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Personal Injury: General
Robert M. Javoronok Jr.	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
Todd L. Lindquist	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	309.829.5700	Personal Injury: General
Kathy A. Olivero	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Workers' Compensation
John J. Waldman	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
Adriel E. Zupances	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Personal Injury: General
Richard P. Klaus	Klaus LeFebvre & Wince LLP	Champaign	217.337.4700	Civil Appellate; Commercial Litigation; PI Def: General; Prof'l Mal Def; RE: Commercial
Thomas B. Borton	Langhenry Gillen Lundquist & Johnson LLC	Champaign	217.607.8144	Commercial Litigation; Medical Malpractice Defense; Prof'l Malpractice Defense
Nicholas M. Schiro	Schiro & Themer	Danville	217.443.1721	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
Rowan E. Themer	Schiro & Themer	Champaign	217.607.0750	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
Denise Knipp Bates	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Elder; Real Estate: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate
Justin N. Brunner	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Civil Rights/Constitution; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Medical Mal Def; PI Def: General
Eric S. Chovanec	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Close/Private Held Business; Employmnt: Mngmnt; Labor: Mngmnt; Work Comp Def
James D. Green	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Ins/Ins Coverage/Reins; Personal Injury Defense: General
Richard R. Harden	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Medical Malpractice Defense; Personal Injury Defense: General
Jacob R. Jackson	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Real Estate: Commercial; Real Estate: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate; Work Comp Def
Nathan T. Kolb	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Civil Appellate; Ins/Ins Coverage/Reins; Medical Malpractice Def; PI Def: General
Kenneth D. Reifsteck	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Civil Appellate; Workers' Compensation Defense
Nathaniel M. Schmitz	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Close/Private Held Bus; Real Estate: Commercial; RE: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate
John M. Sturmanis	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Workers' Compensation Defense
Lott H. Thomas	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Trust/Will/Estate
John T. Wozniak	Wozniak & Associates	Urbana	217.367.1647	Close/Private Held Bus; Real Estate: Commercial; RE: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate

These **EMERGING LAWYERS** have been identified by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois who are age 40 or younger OR who have been admitted to the practice of law for 10 or fewer years.

Elizabeth M. Reynolds	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Workers' Compensation
Tiffany J. Byrne	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Commercial Litigation; Employment: Management; Workers' Compensation Defense
Alyson D. Cloyd	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Medical Malpractice Defense; Personal Injury Defense: General
Philip J. Pence	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Employment: Management
Litany A. Thompson	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Real Estate: Commercial; Real Estate: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate

Leading LawyersSM
Find a better lawyer, fasterSM

emerging lawyersSM
on a fast track to the topSM

A lawyer CANNOT buy the distinction of Leading or Emerging Lawyer. The distinction was earned by being among those lawyers most often recommended by their peers. For a full description of our research process, a complete list of all Leading or Emerging Lawyers, and to view profiles of the lawyers listed on this page, go to

www.LeadingLawyers.com

A Division of Law Bulletin Media – est. 1854

**VICE PRESIDENT
OF ADVERTISING**

Mark Lukas

217-393-8238

mlukas@news-gazette.com

EDITOR

Niko Dugan

217-393-8253

ndugan@news-gazette.com

CONTENT DIRECTOR

Jim Rossow

217-393-8261

jrossow@news-gazette.com

Central Illinois Business magazine is published bimonthly by Central Illinois Multimedia Group LLC, 2101 Fox Drive, Champaign, IL 61820. The magazine is published six times per year and delivered to businesses, community development leaders, chamber of commerce members and other professionals in East Central Illinois. Subscriptions are available at news-gazette.com. Click on "subscribe" at the top of the home page. Postmaster: Send address changes to Central Illinois Business magazine, P.O. Box 677, Champaign, IL 61824-0677. ©2026 by Central Illinois Multimedia Group LLC, all rights reserved. Contents may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher.

Central Illinois Business magazine strives to present fair and accurate reporting and to document any errors as promptly as possible. To report an error, send an email to cibm@news-gazette.com.

TABLE OF CONTENTS AND EDITOR'S NOTE

From the editor's desk



Our theme of profiling the businesses that built us rolls on in 2026.

Our cover story focuses on the Petry Kuhne Company, whose roots go back to the founding of the William C.F. Kuhne Company in 1904. You can see a shining example of their work every time you pass the Art Deco-inspired Champaign City Building, completed in 1935. After merging with longtime competitor C.A. Petry and Sons in 1985, the firm continued its legacy of creating some of the most well-known facilities in C-U.

We've also got a look at Danville Gardens, which just opened for its all-important spring planting season, and where co-owners Nathan and Lisa Campbell are showing their daughter and her family are the ropes so they can pass the longtime stalwart on to a new generation.

Have a suggestion for others we should profile? I'd love to hear about it. My contact info is below.

—Niko

Niko Dugan is the Managing Editor of The News-Gazette. Reach him by email at ndugan@news-gazette.com or by phone at 217-393-8253.

4 BEYOND THE BOARDROOM

Get to know Michael Ujcich, corporate interior designer for Carpet Weavers, who has spent more than 45 years as a store manager and visual merchandiser for some of the biggest names in the department-store business.

8 SPOTLIGHT: UI SCAPES PROGRAM

The 5-year-old initiative has researchers examining agrivoltaics, or how agriculture and solar-energy generation can share space on some of the most fertile land in the country.

11 GUEST COLUMN

Champaign County Chamber of Commerce CEO Laura Weis looks at how influencers are increasingly affecting important decisions, and the pitfalls of equating popularity with expertise.

16 COVER STORY: PETRY KUHNE

The firm that arose from the 1985 merger of longtime competitors and William C.F. Kuhne Co. and C.A. Petry and Sons has been at the heart of some of the most historic and recognizable structures in Champaign-Urbana.

25 SPOTLIGHT: DANVILLE GARDENS

As another planting season gets underway, co-owners Nathan and Lisa Campbell are preparing for their 33rd year at the helm — and showing the ropes to their daughter and her husband, who are set to take over with they retire.

29 GUEST COLUMN

Writing for Age-Friendly Champaign-Urbana, Meghan Edwards, an intern with the UI's Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, & Technology program, talks about its efforts to cultivate an age-friendly campus.

12 FINE PRINT

Building permits filed in Champaign, Mahomet, Rantoul, Savoy and Urbana.

13 INDICATORS

Our highly-sought-after facts and figures for the area.

ON THE COVER

From left, Petry Kuhne owners Ann Deedrich, senior vice president and CFO, Nick Walder, executive vice president and COO, and Chris Uhlarik, president and CEO, are shown in the meeting room at the company's offices in Champaign.

Photo by Robin Scholz



Visit news-gazette.com for updates of business news and event information.

Michael Ujcich

STORY Jeff D'Alessio

PHOTOS Provided

As his friends and followers on social media know by now, **MICHAEL UJCICH** is all about presentation, whether he's designing a new store from scratch or showing off the dish he just whipped up for dinner.

"I have been teased about all the food pictures," he says. "Just like interior design and house staging, plating food is an art. Even a baloney sandwich can look inviting and special."

Take it from the lifelong foodie and retired retail veteran, now in Year 6 of his role as visual director and corporate interior designer for Carpet Weavers Flooring and Furniture Gallery.

A University of Illinois interior-design grad who moved back to Champaign 13 years ago, Ujcich also moonlights as a house staging design consultant for multiple area Realtors after wrapping up a 45-plus-year career of store management, visual merchandising and special events for some of the biggest names in the department-store business — Bergner's, Boston Store, Carson's, Kohl's and Belk.

The native of West Allis, Wis., took time out to answer questions from **Editor Jeff D'Alessio** in the 323rd installment of our weekly speed read spotlighting leaders of organizations big and small.





The hardest thing about being a leader is ... remembering to pause, listen and then answer.

Don't let emotions overrule common sense.

The three adjectives I hope my staff would use to describe me are ... consistent, transparent and empathetic.

My philosophy on meetings is ... have a specific reason to host, have your topics in front of you (written

or on screen), allow attendees to participate and be very sensitive to the time the meeting takes.

My single favorite moment of all-time in this job was ... watching Mark and Tyler Weaver's excitement as they walked through the newly opened East Peoria Carpet Weavers last fall.

I was given a blank floor plan of the new space and planned, merchandised and executed the relocation of that store's contents into

its new location.

I can't live without my ... iPad — for capturing photos, quick notes and a constant reference point.

On my office walls, you'll find ... artwork. No pinned notes or clutter.

I'm frugal in that ... I was raised, going to a Catholic grade school, to use everything you have accessible to you and don't waste supplies that can be recycled, reused or repurposed.

If I could trade places for a week with any other business person in town, I wouldn't mind switching with ... Jeff Scott, CEO of the Stephens Family YMCA. I love the facility and the program offerings and see the interaction he has with his team and members.

My one unbreakable rule of the workplace is ... be truthful and honest in your actions.

The single-most important question I ask job candidates during interviews is ... tell me an example of a time you were in a situation where you did not agree with a direction or activity a previous boss asked you to do.

The first thing I do when I get to work most days is ... look at my planned activities and see if there's time open within the day to tackle

the changes that will occur.

For lunch ... if I have not brought my lunch, Harvest Market or Pekara.

The last luxury in which I indulged was ... traveling with family on vacation. The best example was a spontaneous trip to Copenhagen to spend this past Christmas and New Year's.

The most beneficial college class I took was ... a design studio I took my senior year at UIUC. I had to communicate our design thoughts using a variety of techniques from a fast sketch on a sheet of paper to detailed presentation boards stories.

The last good book I read was ... "Appetite for Life: The Biography of Julia Child." I am a true foodie and Julia has been my inspiration since I was a child.

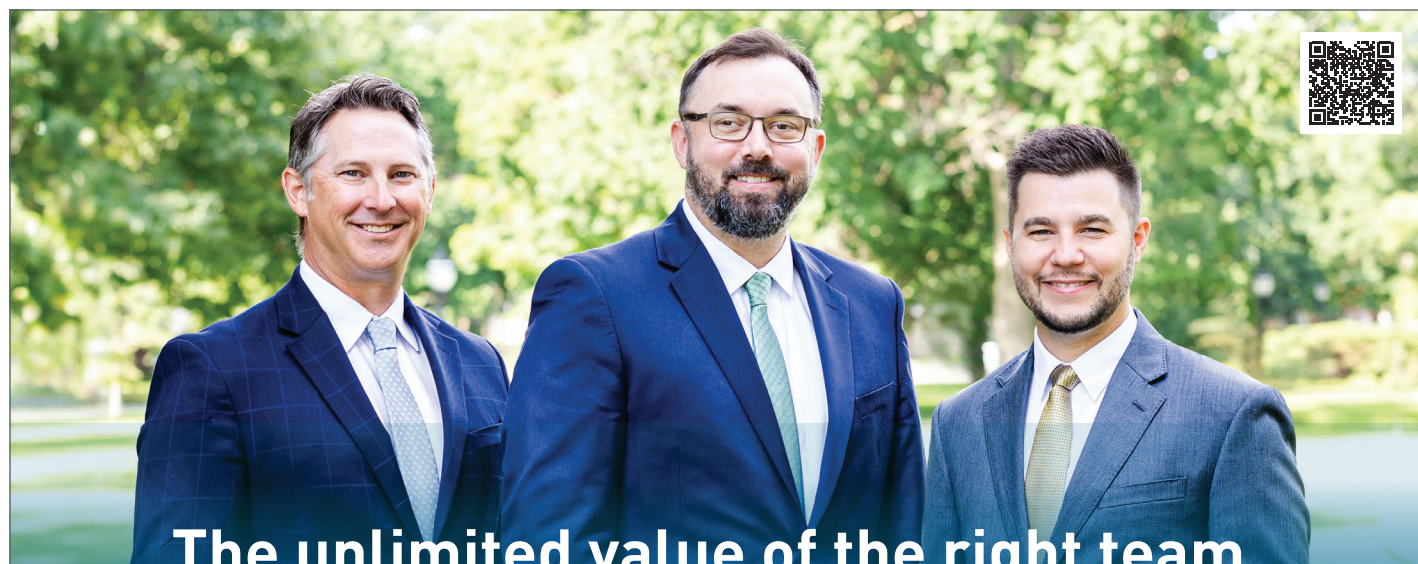
I'm up and at 'em every day by ... 4:40 a.m.

My exercise routine consists of ... early mornings at the Stephens Family YMCA — Pilates, group cycle, Les Mills BodyBalance, Tai Chi, EGYM and any aquatic fitness class.

The first job I ever had was ... cutting grass and pulling weeds for neighbors.

The worst job I ever had was ... delivering appliances for a friend of my father after school while in high school. Not super hard, just boring.

As far as my career calling goes ... I loved playing with building blocks as a child and designing house plans, rearranging furniture, rehanging walls of art and making items look as good as they could for those around me. 



The unlimited value of the right team.

Dan Marker Loan Originator Identifier: 689924	Wes Hanner Loan Originator Identifier: 2740295	Austin Phillips Loan Originator Identifier: 1789101
--	---	--

YOU LIVE HERE. WE LEND HERE.

Investing in the Champaign area
one home at a time.

HICKORYPOINTBANK.COM
Loan Origination Company Identifier: 433956

 **EQUAL HOUSING LENDER** MEMBER FDIC

CHAMPAIGN


HICKORY
POINT BANK Invested.
DECATUR **SPRINGFIELD**



Splitting the difference

Researchers ‘scratching surface’
of merging solar, agricultural farms

STORY Rob Le Cates **PHOTOS** Provided

CHAMPAIGN

The recent rise in conversion of farmland from growing crops to harvesting sunlight has brought with it plenty of social and economic issues — and University of Illinois researchers are in the beginning stages of bridging the gap and allowing both uses to coexist on some of the most fertile land in the country.

The abundant, unimpeded sunlight on Illinois’ cropland near electric grids has caused solar companies to offer double or triple the amount of rent to set up their panels, enticing farmers with a significant raise that reduces the risk associated with crop production. But that also takes those acres out of production for crops, with many fearing they’ll never return to their original use.

UI researchers are experimenting with a compromise they call agrivoltaics, the term used to describe the combined revenue from agriculture and solar-energy generation.

The research is part of the UI’s Sustainably Colocating Agricultural and Photovoltaic Electricity Systems project, started in 2021 through funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

And though it’s only 5 years old, Director Madhu Khanna said it is just getting started.

“We’ve only just started scratching the surface in terms of understanding how agrivoltaics could be used, and currently it’s really just developed as a technological solution to ease the community opposition and the whole issue of conflict around land use,” she said.



At its roots, the project has multiple broad objectives.

“We were interested in looking at how different types of crops, grown in different regions, would perform under agrivoltaics relative to if you were to grow them alone,” she said. “Would it be economically viable? What would the impacts on yield and growing conditions be?”

Those were questions the SCAPES team asked themselves — ideas still being tested today.

SCAPES partnered with the universities of Arizona and Colorado, which have similar setups in different climates. The UI team also worked with Auburn University in Alabama, the UI-Chicago and the National Laboratory of the Rockies.

The UI team is focused on rain-fed commodity crops grown in the Midwest and specialty crops like peppers, tomatoes and kale, while the Arizona team is focused on specialty crops with irrigation and the Colorado team is studying specialty crops and grasses.

All three compiled data from the

fields of each site alongside economic viability and provided their findings to farmers and solar developers.

The first concepts of agrivoltaics dates back to around 40 years ago in Germany, when physicist Adolf Goetzberger first proposed combining agriculture and solar-energy production. In the early 2000s, Europe and Japan started to explore agrivoltaics.

Studies began in the U.S. in late 2000s. Three regions spearheaded the research — the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the University of Arizona and the National Renewable Energy Lab, now the National Lab of the Rockies.

Those labs researched the rudimentary understanding of agrivoltaics and crop growth underneath panels, combining to form the InSPIRE program, which is funded through the U.S. Department of Energy.

Through the years, more private companies and other research institutions started to test agrivoltaics. Today, the U.S. has about 60 agrivoltaic crop farms, 400 agrivoltaic

grazing operations and about a dozen with cattle. Pollinator habitats with native grasses have started to breach the horizon of agrivoltaics, too.

Initially, the UI team started with the utility-scale Solar Farm 2.0 that was already on campus. It featured eight 6-foot-tall panels placed 18 feet apart. The space allowed for five rows of crops to be planted between the photovoltaic cells, but not much else.

J.K. Lee, a key researcher involved in planting, said the distance between arrays did not permit access to modern farming equipment, so the land had to be tended and harvested primarily by hand.

“Cultivating the row crop in between the panels is not easy,” he said. “I think especially accommodating equipment is the biggest challenge — as you know, Midwest agriculture is not small.”

Despite this hurdle, SCAPES established a new site designed with agrivoltaics in mind last year that can accommodate conventional machinery, better simulating how farmers could adapt to the practice.

The Energy Farm sports an 88-kilowatt solar field consisting of 152 bifacial panels that rotate to continuously face the sun throughout the day.

The arrays are arranged in 160-foot-long rows that are elevated 6 feet above the ground, with 40 feet in between each row. The new farm aligns with the sites in Arizona and Colorado sites, allowing the UI team to collect data in tandem with the other locations.

Khanna said one of the challenges in agrivoltaics is specific site designs and crops used, which can diversify findings.

“Agrivoltaics can perform well with (specific) crops under (specific) conditions, but it may have some trade-offs in other locations,” she said. “So having this similarity of design and experimental methods will help us give a better sense of where it works and where it doesn’t.”

An example of give-and-take the UI researchers found involved shade exposure on its first site. The panels shade plants on either side, while the middle crops receive full sunlight.

The SCAPES program published a report on its findings from the 2023 and 2024 growing seasons involving soybeans, sorghum and specialty vegetables grown on the old location.

Researchers found that while soybeans saw a large penalty with shade, having issues with grain weight, sorghum did not share the same fate.

They determined that sorghum could be grown between the panels without significant yield losses. They also concluded that kale, peppers and tomatoes fared well in the partial shade and increased water use.

They found that the shade from the panels keeps the soil beneath them cooler, which increases the retained moisture levels, promoting crop growth.

Most importantly, they looked at the balancing act called land-equivalent ratio, where revenue from solar generation can offset losses from lower crop yields.



Khanna, the program director, said this basically allows the SCAPES team to compare apples to oranges, in the form of kilowatt hours and bushels.

“That land-equivalent ratio, in most cases, was actually greater than 1, which indicates that the overall productivity of the land improves in terms of the total combined output that you could get (from) both the energy and the crop,” she said.

Part of the research involved surveying solar companies and farmers. In response to the rise in cropland being rented out for solar farms, many local governments around the country have instituted restrictions or bans on the practice.

“This often causes delays in getting solar projects approved and often has to be canceled, or they may not get the best land they’re looking for,” Khanna said. “So agrivoltaics is a way to overcome some of that opposition, and that seems to be a major motivator for solar developers.”

The researchers theorized that while the majority of farmers still prefer the conventional method of agriculture, if rental payments from solar companies are too good to refuse, agrivoltaics can be a good compromise over turning over their land completely to solar panels.

Farmers “don’t have the riskiness associated with crop production, and so even though yields might go down a little bit, (the income) is more than making up

for it,” Khanna said. “So for farmers, this is likely to be an appealing option.”

Implementation brings a few challenges. Depending on the farm’s size, farmers may have to maneuver among more narrow and shorter spaces, which might cause them to shift from growing corn and soybeans to shorter crops and/or hay.

Adding agrivoltaics also comes with increased costs for proper machinery to fit in between panels.

Khanna said the technology around agrivoltaics has the potential to be very beneficial, but only under certain conditions, and the current equipment comes with high costs.

“We need to think about what kind of policy incentives would be needed to promote agrivoltaics, and those could take form as investment tax credits and things like that, which would lower the cost for developers and provide more interest and opportunity to be able to expand this,” she said.

The researchers foresee an increased demand for electricity in the future, and as the practice scales up, they hope proper equipment will become more incentivized and accessible.

“One could imagine in the future scenarios where it may be more distributed, where individual farmers are both generating electricity for themselves and for the grid and using their land for multifunctional use,” Khanna said. 



By LAURA WEIS
CIB contributor

Who's influencing you?

Several months ago, a TikTok influencer went viral after sharing what she called a travel hack with her 700,000 followers. Her solution for running out of clean underwear while traveling was not to use the sink or hotel laundry. Instead, she demonstrated how she uses the in-room coffee maker to rinse them out and then finishes the job with a blow dryer.

Let that sit for a minute. That's the same coffee maker that the next guest is using for their morning coffee.

On TikTok, she identifies herself as an expert in fitness and nutrition. That may be true. But expertise in one area does not translate into expertise in all areas. And yet, because of how social media works, "experts" are often seen as one size fits all.

The reaction online was immediate, and for good reason. This was not harmless. It was unsanitary, inconsiderate and a perfect example of how confidently bad advice can spread when it is packaged well.

Social media has made it very easy to assign credibility to strangers online. We use the word "expert" far too loosely. Experts are supposed to have knowledge or skill developed through training or experience — not just visibility, an online following or the ability to create content people want to watch.

There was a time when getting advice from an expert required effort. You made an appointment. You read a book. You sought out someone who had credentials and experience. That process was slower, but it created accountability. Now we have constant, immediate access to information, which blurs the line between someone who knows what they are talking about and someone who simply knows how to look like they do.

At the same time, the way influence works has completely shifted. Companies used to hire celebrities to promote products. It was obvious what was happening. Now, brands regularly partner with individuals who have built online audiences. They feel more relatable and authentic.

But there is a real question behind that shift. Are these individuals being chosen because they are knowledgeable, or because they are effective at reaching people? While those are both important concepts, they are not the same thing.

And there is a strong incentive structure driving it. According to a 2023 Morning Consult survey, 57 percent of Generation Z want to be influencers. A significant percentage of older generations would consider it as well. The draw is obvious — visibility, income, flexibility and the ability to build something of your own.

With more than 4.2 billion people on social media globally, influencing is no longer a side activity — it is a business. While many creators make very little, a small percentage (7.2 percent) earn \$200,000 or more annually. The desire for fame, community and money is enough to keep the content coming and influencers pushing the boundaries of what they post.

The challenge for the audience is figuring out whom to trust. I recently came across a Midwestern mom documenting her family's

plan to pay down \$214,000 in debt. She walks through how they are doing this on a daily basis. She is honest about what is working and what is not. And to her credit, she does not claim to be a financial adviser. But that does not mean her content will not be interpreted as advice.

If you follow this sort of content long enough, it starts to feel like a blueprint. And for some people, it may be helpful. For others, it may be detrimental.

That is where the line starts to blur. Some content is low risk. If someone wants to show you how they organize their pantry, the worst outcome is that you buy a few containers you did not need. Other content can be high stakes.

We have already seen what happens when that line is crossed. An Australian wellness influencer built a following by claiming she had cured her cancer through diet. She never had cancer. The people who followed her were not looking for lifestyle tips. They were looking for hope. There is no gray area in that type of situation — it is just harmful.

Which brings us back to the coffee maker. It is easy to dismiss something like that as one bad post. It is not. It is a reminder of how quickly credibility is assigned and how rarely it is questioned. A large social-media following does not make someone an expert. Confidence does not make something accurate, and repetition does not make something true.

So, how do we discern and avoid bad advice? We need to ask basic questions before accepting what we view as fact. What actually qualifies this person to speak on a topic? Are they trained, or do they speak from personal experience? Both can be useful, but they are not interchangeable. Just because someone on the internet has read a book on a particular topic and can regurgitate what they read does not make them automatically an expert.

Pay attention to how the information is presented. If it sounds absolute, overly simple or too good to be true, that should give you pause. Most legitimate expertise includes nuance. And ask yourself about the downsides. If someone follows this advice and it turns out to be wrong, what would be the cost?

We have more access to information than ever before. That is not going to change. What has to change is how we evaluate it. Because at some point, it stops being about bad advice on the internet and starts being about the consequences of believing it.

Underwear in the coffee maker may sound funny to some. But real damage was done. There is reputational damage to the hotel industry and the hotel in question. Millions of viewers reacted the way you would expect because they understand that hotel coffee makers are shared equipment.

That influencer has ruined that morning coffee on the hotel balcony for me. For that, I am forever salty. 

Laura Weis is president and CEO of the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce. She can be reached at LauraW@champaigncounty.org.

BUILDING PERMITS

Listed are permits for all new single-family and multifamily residences, as well as commercial and industrial work and residential remodeling costing over \$25,000, in Champaign, Mahomet, Rantoul, Savoy and Urbana. Permits are listed by applicant, description of work, location and estimated cost.

CHAMPAIGN

- SpartanX LLC, rooftop solar at 711 Doisy Lane, \$56,678.
- Sunrun Installation Services, rooftop solar at 2905 Valley Brook Drive, \$38,950.
- Tron Solar LLC, rooftop solar on house at 1702 Ridgeland Drive, \$39,076.
- Gra-Mulc, LLC, structural repairs to single-family dwelling at 301 W. Beardsley Ave., \$50,000.
- A-Plus Investments Inc., new single-family home at 1508 Jacobs Blvd., \$564,000.
- Roessler Construction & Contracting Inc., elevator upgrades at 82 E. University Ave., \$369,000.
- Creekside Construction Services LLC, office fit-out at 412 Town Center Blvd., \$530,456.
- Taylor Brothers Construction, exterior alteration at 21 E. Marketview Drive, \$151,588.
- Christy-Foltz Inc., fire pump room modifications at 102 S. Duncan Road, \$225,790.
- ECI Construction Services, expansion of office space at 100 Trade Center Drive, Unit Ste. 402, \$120,447.
- Heartland Construction Management LLC, new six-story multi-family at 310 Chalmers St., \$28,773,000.
- Polar Block Sales Inc., window replacement at 4405 Stonebridge Drive, \$58,000.
- Freedom Roofing & Construction, Inc., roof replacement at 1003 W. Church St., \$34,000.
- Palomino Construction and Renovations LLC, apartment renovations at 202 E. John St., \$25,000.
- Elite ICT, broadcast tower at 3402 N. Duncan Road, \$40,000.
- Central Roofing LLC, roof replacement — house and attached garage at 404 S. Willis Ave., \$91,521.81.
- Miller Enterprises, demolition at 1905 N. Neil St., \$42,500.
- Delauter Development, interior renovations at 2223 S. Neil St., \$423,378.
- Unity Construction Management LLC, new clubhouse building at 522 Kenwood Road, \$1,199,000.
- Unity Construction Management LLC, new three-story multi-family dwelling at 520 Kenwood Road, \$3,268,746.
- Unity Construction Management LLC, new multi-family dwelling at 502 Kenwood Road, \$3,268,746.
- Freedom Roofing & Construction Inc., commercial roof replacement at 811 W. Hill St., \$40,000.
- Barber & DeAtley Inc., SURS office remodel at 1801 Fox Drive, \$93,000.
- Taylor Construction and Design, LLC, new single-family dwelling at 1937 S. Stone Creek Blvd., \$297,297.
- Bristo Properties, LLC, alteration/renovation/remodel at 1003 E. Florida Ave., \$69,200.
- Dalco Design Build, new single-family dwelling at 508 N. Beacon Hill Circle, \$524,523.
- C-U Under Construction, new single-family dwelling at 1309 S. Smith Road, \$232,000.
- Tron Solar LLC, solar installation at 1203 W. Dublin St., \$31,028.80.
- Nyadaro Homes, new single-family dwelling at 707 N. Beacon Hill Circle, \$318,737.
- Cramer Siding & Window Co., LLC, accessory structure at 101 W. Windsor Road, \$50,896.
- Habitat for Humanity, new single-family dwelling at 1112 W. Church St., \$122,000.
- C-U Under Construction, new single-family dwelling at 1311 S. Smith Road, \$232,000.
- C-U Under Construction, new single-family dwelling at 1209 S. Smith Road, \$232,000. ✕

SAVOY

- Bratcher Heating & Air, mechanical work at 503 Cayman Way, \$37,920.
- Nyadaro Homes, building work at 505 Harpers Ferry, \$440,000.

URBANA

- Hernandez Roofing LLC, roof replacement, repair or replace sheathing at 2701 N. Cunningham Ave., \$685,000.
- Petry-Kuhne Co., alteration/renovation/remodel at 611 W. Park St., \$2,837,558.

Local Banking. Big Possibilities.



Business Services to support your growing business.



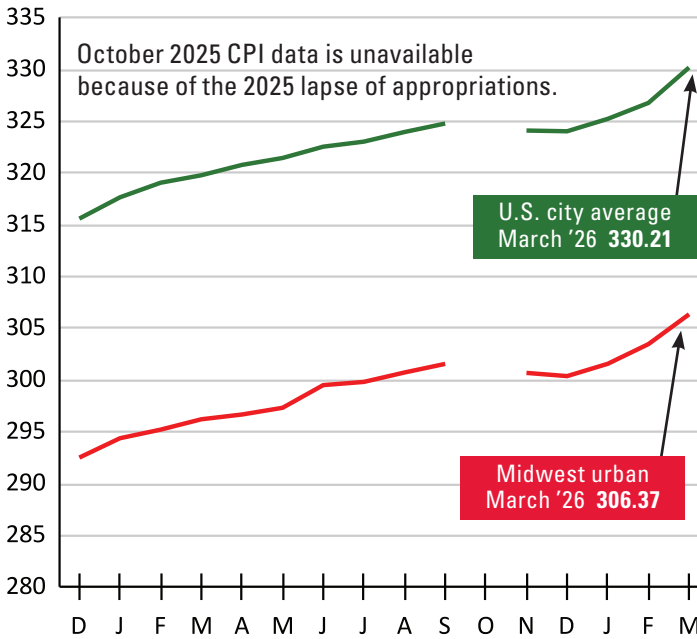
Clock Tower Community Bank
A Division of **Morton Community Bank**

2434 Village Green Place,
Champaign
(888) 418 - 5585
hometownbanks.com

INDICATORS

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 that into context, a current CPI of 270.75 means a marketbasket of goods and services that cost \$100 in 1982-84 now costs \$270.75.



Hotel/motel statistics

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

TOTAL REVENUE			
February '26	January '26	Change	
\$300,335.49	\$267,214.95	▲	12.39%
YEAR-TO-DATE TOTALS			
2026	2025	Change	
\$567,550.44	\$620,290.49	▼	-8.5%

Source: Cities of Champaign and Urbana

Unemployment rates for Central Illinois counties, state and nation

County	Labor Force	Jobless	Jan. '26 (%)	Dec. '25 (%)	Jan. '25 (%)	Change Month (%)	Change Year (%)
Champaign	105,205	5,084	4.8	4.8	3.9	0.0	▲ 0.9
Coles	24,198	1,005	4.2	4.5	3.8	▼ -0.3	▲ 0.4
Douglas	9,678	416	4.3	4.2	3.6	▲ 0.1	▲ 0.7
Edgar	7,896	408	5.2	5.1	4.4	▲ 0.1	▲ 0.8
Ford	6,252	341	5.5	4.8	4.9	▲ 0.7	▲ 0.6
Iroquois	11,415	761	6.7	5.8	5.8	▲ 0.9	▲ 0.9
Macon	43,906	2,936	6.7	6.6	6.0	▲ 0.1	▲ 0.7
McLean	91,912	4,073	4.4	4.6	4.0	▼ -0.2	▲ 0.4
Moultrie	6,788	280	4.1	4.3	3.7	▼ -0.2	▲ 0.4
Piatt	8,417	359	4.3	4.1	4.0	▲ 0.2	▲ 0.3
Vermilion	30,224	2,005	6.6	6.5	6.4	▲ 0.1	▲ 0.2
Region	345,891	17,668	5.2	5.0	4.6	▲ 0.1	▲ 0.6
State	6,501,701	348,863	5.4	4.8	4.3	▲ 0.6	▲ 1.1
U.S.	169,612,000	7,942,000	4.7	4.1	4.4	▲ 0.6	▲ 0.3

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, U.S. Department of Labor. Figures not seasonally adjusted.

CU MTD ridership

	February '26	February '25	Change
Adults	17,512	17,537	▼ -0.1%
School	41,175	39,169	▲ 5.1%
DASH/Senior	27,029	26,076	▲ 3.7%
Annual pass	54,138	45,909	▲ 17.9%
UI faculty/staff	22,956	23,213	▼ -1.1%
UI student	1,178,289	1,188,303	▼ 0.8%
Monthly total	1,369,084	1,368,268	▲ 0.1%
Fiscal YTD*	8,158,778	7,861,957	▲ 3.8%

* Fiscal year runs July 2025 through June 2026.

Crop progress

Released April 13, 2026, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Grain	April 12, 2026	2025	'21-25 avg.
Illinois corn planted	4%	1%	3%
Illinois soybeans planted	7%	2%	2%
Winter wheat headed	6%	1%	3%

	VP	Poor	Fair	Good	Xlt
Winter wheat condition	2%	4%	27%	57%	10%

Source: USDA

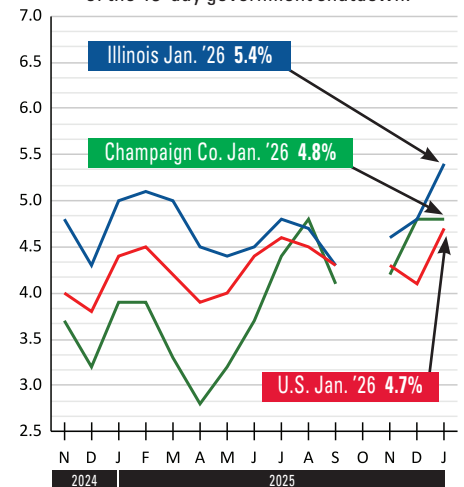
Prices at the pump

Average price per gallon of regular unleaded gas as of April 14, 2026.

Area	April '26	April '25
Bloomington-Normal	\$4.16	\$3.32
Champaign-Urbana	\$4.23	\$3.33
Chicago	\$4.76	\$3.79
Danville	\$4.21	\$3.38
Decatur	\$4.15	\$3.31
Illinois	\$4.38	\$3.43
U.S.	\$4.12	\$3.18

Source: AAA

October '25 data is unavailable because of the 43-day government shutdown.



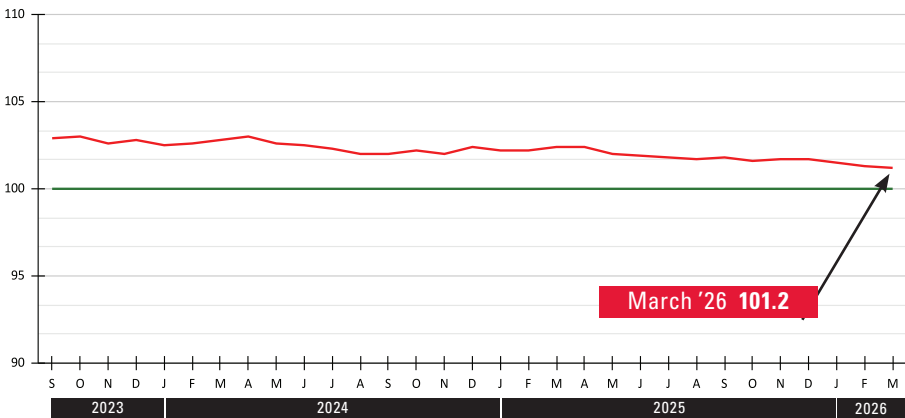
University of Illinois flash index

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



Champaign County retail sales collections

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	Change ('20 vs. '25)
Champaign	\$27,327,764.32	\$23,761,243.84	\$22,423,142.90	\$21,941,280.97	\$21,169,808.79	\$16,177,806	▲ 68.9%
Mahomet	\$1,877,865.69	\$1,423,557.79	\$1,349,874.56	\$1,270,175.71	\$1,168,075.53	\$803,904	▲ 133.6%
Philo	\$224,953.68	\$159,392.79	\$168,537.50	\$165,797.37	\$150,664.38	\$110,493	▲ 103.6%
Rantoul	\$2,319,924.88	\$2,020,243.37	\$1,942,623.56	\$1,863,869.32	\$1,890,124.30	\$1,595,889	▲ 45.3%
Savoy	\$3,568,918.62	\$3,181,498.39	\$2,956,401.11	\$2,774,294.31	\$2,819,845.62	\$2,414,976	▲ 47.8%
St. Joseph	\$446,091.17	\$375,011.77	\$362,727.36	\$349,775.82	\$316,934.00	\$241,633	▲ 84.6%
Tolono	\$336,401.42	\$279,782.36	\$258,874.61	\$255,139.44	\$224,679.43	\$172,196	▲ 95.4%
Urbana	\$8,844,919.89	\$7,669,750.41	\$7,496,995.63	\$7,216,138.34	\$6,584,831.41	\$5,478,433	▲ 61.4%
Unincorporated	\$2,487,448.57	\$1,772,509.70	\$1,678,985.96	\$1,608,766.99	\$1,489,034.06	\$1,089,562	▲ 128.3%
County total	\$45,814,738.51	\$40,642,990.42	\$37,564,803.18	\$37,445,238.27	\$35,813,998	\$28,084,892	▲ 63.1%

Source: Latest statistics available from Illinois Department of Revenue

Home sales Total units sold, including condominiums, by most-recent quarter.

County	4Q 2025			4Q 2024			Median sales price		
			Pct. Change				4Q 2025	4Q 2024	Pct. Change
Champaign	502	471	▲ 6.6%	2,149	2,129	▲ 0.9%	\$239,900	\$220,450	▲ 8.8%
Coles	130	122	▲ 6.6%	480	505	▼ -5.0%	\$139,000	\$123,000	▲ 13.0%
Douglas	47	30	▲ 56.7%	162	130	▲ 24.6%	\$175,500	\$175,750	▼ -0.1%
Edgar	44	43	▲ 2.3%	139	157	▼ -11.5%	\$127,500	\$92,000	▲ 38.6%
Ford	47	41	▲ 14.6%	154	181	▼ -14.9%	\$140,000	\$135,000	▲ 3.7%
Iroquois	70	57	▲ 22.8%	270	269	▲ 0.4%	\$165,000	\$132,500	▲ 24.5%
Macon	310	312	▼ -0.6%	1,387	1,316	▲ 5.4%	\$145,000	\$138,250	▲ 4.9%
McLean	465	517	▼ -10.1%	1,967	2,052	▼ -4.1%	\$253,000	\$238,900	▲ 5.9%
Moultrie	37	33	▲ 12.1%	108	90	▲ 20.0%	\$195,000	\$140,000	▲ 39.3%
Piatt	74	61	▲ 21.3%	229	221	▲ 3.6%	\$210,000	\$240,000	▼ -12.5%
Vermilion	160	162	▼ -1.2%	633	679	▼ -6.8%	\$124,500	\$115,000	▲ 8.3%
Illinois	31,633	31,539	▲ 0.3%	136,650	131,194	▲ 4.2%	\$299,900	\$285,000	▲ 5.2%

Source: Illinois Association of Realtors

Willard Airport passenger totals

Monthly totals	February '26	January '26	Change
Enplanements	6,497	5,813	▲ 12%
YTD totals	2026	2025	Change
Enplanements	12,310	12,184	▲ 0.01%
Annual totals	2025	2024	Change
Enplanements	85,676	84,865	▲ 0.01%

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 9, 2026, for the U.S. and for the North Central region, which includes Illinois, and the average rates for the U.S. one year ago. The Primary Mortgage Market Survey no longer publishes fees/points or adjustable rates, as of Nov. 17, 2022.

Mortgage type	U.S. April '26	U.S. April '25
30-year fixed	6.37%	6.62%
15-year fixed	5.74%	5.82%

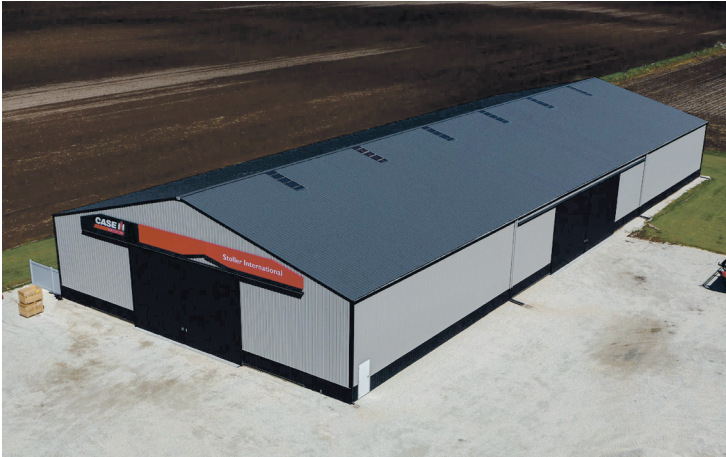
Source: Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp.

BUILD SMARTER.

KEEP MORE OF YOUR INVESTMENT.

Certain commercial buildings may qualify for enhanced tax advantages. Let us help you maximize your project value.

[Learn more at fbibuildings.com/com-tax](https://fbibuildings.com/com-tax)





(800) 552-2981
FBIBUILDINGS.COM/COM-TAX



OUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY, CLIENT SERVICE, AND INTEGRITY HAS POSITIONED US AS A LEADER IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FOR OVER 100 YEARS.



PETRY KUHNE / SINCE 1904

Petry Kuhne Co.

HISTORICAL BUILDING

Champaign firm that traces roots to 1904 has had a hand in some of C-U's most iconic structures, young and old

STORY Carol Roehm

PHOTOS Robin Scholz

CHAMPAIGN

The Art Deco details adorning the façade of the Champaign City Building are a reminder of the era when the William C.F. Kuhne Company built the historic structure in 1935.

Just as the downtown Champaign landmark has stood the test of time, so has its general contractor, which was founded in 1904 and is now known as Petry Kuhne Company.



From left, Petry Kuhne owners Ann Deedrich, senior vice president and CFO, Chris Uhlarik, president and CEO, and Nick Walder, executive vice president and COO, talk about the company in its meeting room at its offices in Champaign.

The Champaign City Building, designed in the Art Deco style, shortly after its completion in 1935. It was built by the William C.F. Kuhne Company, which merged with C.A. Petry and Sons in 1985 to form today's Petry Kuhne. Provided



For more than 120 years, Petry Kuhne has been a major contributor to the development of Champaign-Urbana and the surrounding area. The company provides general contracting, construction management, steel erection and design-build services.

The current iteration is a combination of former competitors William C.F. Kuhne Co. and C.A. Petry and Sons. The latter was founded in 1924 as King and Petry. In 1985, the Petry and Kuhne families, who were longtime friends, merged their companies to form Petry Kuhne.

The company is now owned by equal shareholders Chris Uhlarik, who serves as president and CEO; Nick Walder, executive vice president and COO; and Ann Deedrich, senior vice president and CFO. They bought the firm from Greg Petry and Pat Dorsey in 2014.

"All three of us are longtime employees," said Walder, who joined Petry Kuhne in 1998 as an intern during college. Uhlarik began his career with the company in 1995 as an estimator.

Deedrich, a granddaughter of C.A. Petry, has been with Petry Kuhne since 1989 and is the third generation of the Petry family to be involved with the company's leadership.

She said in her 37 years with the company, one project stands out: the One Main Plaza in the heart of downtown Champaign. What previously had been a parking lot was transformed into a five-story, mixed-use property completed in 2004.

"What makes the One Main Street project unique is that it is at the same site as the W.T. Grant store that was a C.A. Petry and Sons project in 1950 but had been torn down," Deedrich said.

"There was a lot to that project," Walder added. "There's condos as well as retail and office space."

What sets Petry Kuhne apart from other general contractors is its ability to perform much of its own work, including sitework and concrete, carpentry, and selective demolition, as well as steel erection through its wholly owned Central Illinois Erectors division.

Petry Kuhne provided construction-management and general-contracting services for the 20,080-square-foot Christie Clinic at the Riverfront Medical Office Building in Danville, which was completed in 2023.



“We also partner with architects and engineers, and we hire carpenters, operators and laborers, concrete finishers and iron workers,” Deedrich said.

Petry Kuhne has been a part of numerous new construction and renovation projects across East Central Illinois, including schools, health care facilities, parks and buildings on the UI campus.

“The biggest part of our work

has been health care and schools,” Walder said.

Uhlarik agreed, adding “we have work going out to 2029.”

Some of the more notable past and recent projects include:

University of Illinois

→ Petry Kuhne was involved with the major restoration of Harker Hall, the oldest building on campus near

the Illini Union, in the 1990s. The project entailed demolishing all three interior floors and building back four stories with a new roof.

“It became a new building on the inside,” Walder said. “It was completely gutted, but we maintained the historical features on the outside.”

Uhlarik, who had been an UI architecture major, recalled walking past Harker Hall every day while it was

being restored, never dreaming that someday he would be the president of the company that led the project.

→ Petry Kuhne was awarded a \$12.6 million general trades contract for the construction of the 112,000-square-foot, \$79.2 million Henry Dale and Betty Smith Football Performance Center completed in 2019.

Located east of Memorial Stadium, the three-story center features coaches’

offices, an auditorium for team meetings, therapeutic pools, a bowling alley and a miniature golf course on the roof.

→ The company was involved with the new \$13.4 million soccer and track complex at the new Demirjian Park on campus that provides locker rooms and facilities for the women’s soccer and men’s and women’s track teams, as well as bleachers, a concession area and restroom facilities.

Other UI projects Petry Kuhne has been a part of include ongoing industrial services at Abbott Power Plant, Memorial Stadium renovations, and renovations at the Veterinary Medicine Small Animal Clinic that also entailed an addition to create a small-animal surgery unit.

“We also just finished a couple of frat houses,” Deedrich said, referring to renovations at the Delta Upsilon and Farmhouse fraternities.



Petry Kuhne was involved with the \$13.4 million soccer and track complex at the new Demirjian Park on the University of Illinois campus that provides locker rooms and facilities, bleachers, a concession area and restrooms.

Health care

→ Petry Kuhne constructed the Kirby Medical Center Therapy and Wellness Center in Monticello. The \$11.8 million new facility, completed in 2023, accommodates the expansion of the medical center's rehabilitation services.

A few years earlier, Petry Kuhne had been involved in the 32,000-square-foot expansion and renovation of the Kirby Medical Center. Shortly after the completion of an addition and renovation of the lab and rehabilitation area in 2019, the medical center's robust rehabilitation services had outgrown the space, making a new facility necessary, Walder said.

→ Petry Kuhne provided construction-management and general-contracting services for the 20,080-square-foot Christie Clinic at the Riverfront Medical Office Building, completed in 2023, and provided design-build services for the recently completed 8,000-square-foot Carle outpatient sleep lab and an additional 8,000-square-foot retail space at the Carle at the Riverfront campus, both in Danville.

Schools

→ Petry Kuhne provided construction management for a \$28 million project to build additions and remodel both Monticello High School and Washington Elementary School as well as construct a new 5,850-square-foot athletic facility.

The project included a



A framed photo of One Main Plaza, which Petry Kuhne completed in 2004 on the site of the former W.T. Grant store, which C.A. Petry and Sons built in 1950, hangs on the wall at the company's offices in Champaign.

new gymnasium, STEM classrooms, elementary classrooms, an auditorium, a media center, administration offices, locker rooms, classroom renovations and HVAC upgrades.

"We remodeled the entire high school and built a brand new building with a gymnasium and auditorium and a new athletic facility across from the schools," Walder said.

→ The company provided construction services for the new Danville High School football facility, featuring new bleachers, artificial turf, new lighting, a new scoreboard, a new sound system and a complex underground storm-drainage system.

→ Petry Kuhne recently finished a major renovation project at the Champaign school district's Columbia Center that preserves the school's historic architecture, which is more than a century

old. The project also includes an addition and new elevator, restroom renovations, window and roof replacement, new finishes, new flooring, new ceilings, new kitchen serving equipment, a new fire-sprinkler system, new plumbing, new HVAC, new lighting, new electrical service, new low-voltage upgrades, and a new fire alarm system.

→ The company oversaw the construction of a new 16,187-square-foot gymnasium at Argenta-Oreana High School, featuring new varsity basketball and volleyball courts, locker rooms and restroom facilities.

→ Petry Kuhne provided design-build services for a new gymnasium, classroom additions and administration offices at St. Thomas School in Philo, completed in 2005.

→ In the early 2000s, Petry Kuhne was involved with remodeling the circa-1951

Booker T. Washington School and a project at Garden Hills School that entailed mostly new construction.

Petry Kuhne's work also can be seen at many public places around Champaign-Urbana, such as the new Champaign Public Library completed in 2008, the Champaign County Courthouse addition, the Champaign police station addition and remodel, two new Urbana fire stations, the Illinois Terminal intermodal connection hub completed in the early 2000s, as well as renovations at the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District.

"We've touched a lot of areas," Walder said.

Some of Petry Kuhne's projects have revitalized recreational spaces, such as at Scott Park and Hessel Park, both in Champaign, and created tennis and pickleball courts at Middletown Park in Mahomet and a new pickleball complex north of Centennial High School on West John Street in Champaign.

Centennial Park's eight pickleball courts were so highly anticipated, Walder said, that a crowd of eager players had gathered as the project wrapped up.

"We were putting the finishing touches on the punch list, and there was a crowd of people waiting to use it," he said. "Finally, the park district officials said to just let them go ahead and play."

Deedrich said Petry Kuhne just received the go-ahead to build an additional eight pickleball courts at Centennial Park.



Petry Kuhne was awarded a \$12.6 million general-trades contract for the construction of the 112,000-square-foot, \$79.2 million Henry Dale and Betty Smith Football Performance Center next to Gies Memorial Stadium that was completed in 2019.



The fourth generation of the Petry family, Deedrich's son Cameron, is set to continue the legacy as a shareholder when she retires at the end of the year.

"Cameron started in February," she said. "He's a CPA, graduated from the U of I and will be the CFO."

In retirement, Deedrich plans to spend more time with family, especially with a new grandchild in Tampa, Fla.

Even after nearly 30 years at Petry Kuhne, Walder said he still finds the work fulfilling and sometimes surprising.

One of those surprises occurred during a renovation of Busey Wealth Management at Busey Bank's downtown Urbana location about eight years ago.

"We found a beam with C.A. Petry and Sons on it that was from when the bank was built in 1981," Walder said. "It's rewarding when you drive by, and you know what went into a project — the blood, sweat and tears." ✂



In the 1990s, Petry Kuhne was involved with the major restoration of Harker Hall, the oldest building on the University of Illinois campus, next to the Illini Union. The project entailed demolishing all three interior floors and building back four stories with a new roof.

MONDAY MEETINGS MADE BETTER WITH MICHAELS' CATERING BOX LUNCHES



MICHAELS'
CATERING
217-351-2500 104 W. Tomaras Ave., Savoy

Start or Expand Your Business with Help from the RPC

The RPC has financing programs to
help businesses throughout East
Central Illinois.

*See if we can assist your start-up
or expansion!*

- Friendly/flexible loan terms
- Up to 50% project cost
- Rates and requirement vary

Contact Kathy Larson
for more information

☎ 217-819-4101
✉ klarson@ccrpc.org

rpc CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION

www.ccrpc.org/FinancingPrograms

 The RPC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Danville Gardens

Season of growth

A photograph of Nathan Campbell, co-owner of Danville Gardens, standing in a large greenhouse. He is wearing a red t-shirt and a baseball cap, smiling at the camera. The greenhouse is filled with thousands of ferns hanging from the ceiling in green pots. In the background, there is a wooden structure, possibly a bar or seating area, and a red scissor lift. The floor is concrete, and the overall atmosphere is bright and airy.

Danville Gardens co-owner Nathan Campbell poses underneath the thousands of ferns hanging from the ceiling in the main greenhouse as he prepares to open for the season.

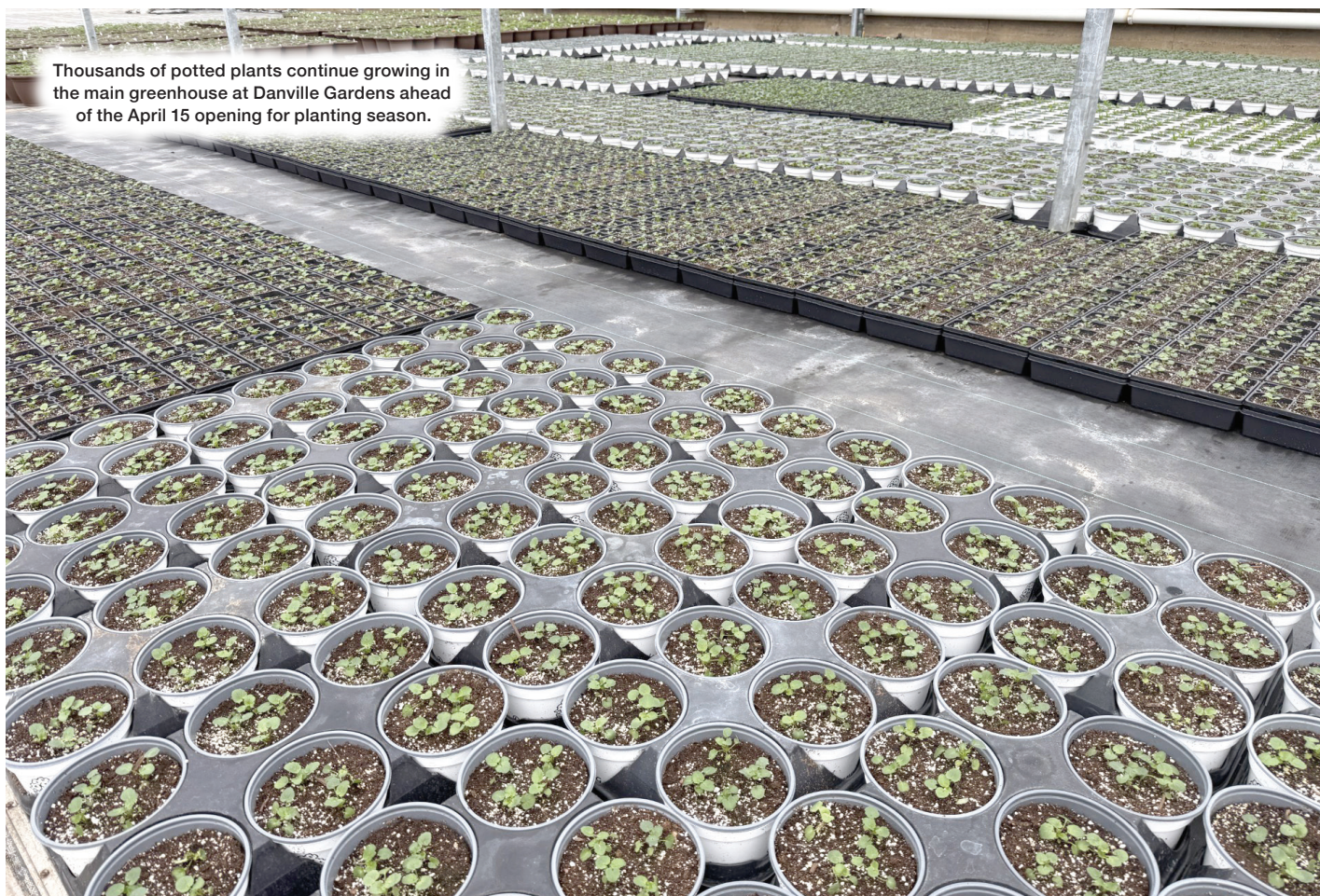
Co-owners excited to welcome back customers while showing the next generation the ropes

STORY and PHOTOS Jennifer Bailey

The 60-degree weather that showed up in February had Danville Gardens co-owners Nathan and Lisa Campbell excited for new beginnings for their business

DANVILLE beyond the start of another planting season.

Their daughter, Kendall Swanson, her husband, Andrew, and their two children have moved back to the area to learn the ropes as Nathan and Lisa look to retire in a few years.



Thousands of potted plants continue growing in the main greenhouse at Danville Gardens ahead of the April 15 opening for planting season.

Their locations also have some changes: There are new roofs on the greenhouses at the main facility at 1307 Cleary Ave., and both it and the now-2-year-old building at 3585 N. Vermilion St. opened at the same time this year — April 15.

The Campbells are marking their 33rd year as owners of Danville Gardens, and they're only the third in its history. The business was started by Billy Welchel around 1910 (the original greenhouse still stands), after which Walter and Mildred Ahrens held the reins for 54 years.

The Campbells took over in 1993 and have enjoyed a successful run. Nathan says they are excited to keep it in the family when he and Lisa retire.

Andrew Swanson, originally from Iowa, moved to Danville with Kendall and their family about nine months ago.

"We're kind of Nathan and Lisa's

retirement plan in the next, you know, five-ish years," he said.

Nathan Campbell said he and Lisa are still working on a timeline for their retirement, and his daughter and son-in-law will be working and learning the business over the next few years.

Kendall Swanson studied engineering and worked in real estate. Andrew said in talking with his wife's parents, he and Kendall came to the conclusion that taking over the family business would be a great opportunity.

"The family aspect of it, of just getting to be so close," he said. "I can literally run home on break and go see them."

He said there's a lot to learn about the business, but his in-laws are great to work with and learn from.

Andrew said the loyal customer base "just speaks a lot about how hard they work and how hard the team works

here. It's a great place to work even for just the last eight or nine months."

The business was a natural fit for the family. Nathan Campbell grew up in the greenhouse industry and was working in Virginia when he and Lisa started to look at owning one. They found an ad for Danville Gardens in Greenhouse Grower magazine.

When the Campbells moved to Danville to take over the business, there was about 70,000 square feet of greenhouse. They tore down 40,000 square feet and kept the original greenhouse, called House 1, in the back. They then rebuilt everything else and tied it all together, expanding to a total of about 100,000 square feet of greenhouse space.

The seasonal garden center is open from April 15 through the end of June. They are closed in July and August to grow mums and items for fall, then reopen in September and October.



A large banner hanging under the awning at one of the main entrances of Danville Gardens in mid-February notes that it is closed for the season and will reopen in mid-April.

“So, we are really only open five months out of the year,” Nathan said. “So, we do a lot in a hurry.

“Our spring season is our big one. We make about 80 percent of our money in about six weeks.”

He said they open a little bit later in the year because they want to make sure the weather is cooperative for everybody and the business can get busy right away.

Customers love and get excited about opening dates throughout the year, he said.

“It works really well,” Nathan said. “It’s not full, but we have something here all the time.”

For their geraniums, which are big sellers, the plan is a little different this year.

BURT ETCHISON | STEWART GRAIN COMPANY
First Financial Bank Customer

Business Growth Rarely Happens Alone

What does it take to last more than 100 years in agriculture?

For Stewart Grain, it starts with trust built over generations. But history alone isn't enough. With guidance from First Financial, Stewart Grain found a financial partner willing to go deeper, learn about their business and build credit solutions that supported both stability and growth.

SEE THE FULL GROWTH STORY AT
first-online.bank/business

Member FDIC Equal Housing Lender
02-260004-CA

Employee Josh Lane waters potted plants at Danville Gardens.



They bought unrooted cuttings and will root their own starts. Nathan said that will cut down on how long it will take to grow them in the greenhouse.

In the offseason, from October to mid-February, they also recovered about 80 percent of their greenhouse roofs with new plastic. It's now brighter in the greenhouses, with more light for more growth.

Nathan said when they changed the roofs before, about every 12-15 years, they could see a two-week reduction in crop time. He said when the temperature this past winter was below zero, the greenhouses stayed in the 60s.

He a warm, early will mean the

flowers and plants will get more light and heat, and will therefore grow a little quicker.

In mid-February, they were planting about 10,000 perennials, and they also typically have about 6,000 ferns and more than 30,000 hanging baskets ready for opening day.

About a week after the perennials, several thousand small starter plants began to arrive in trays of about 100, which they were set to plant in baskets.

They don't grow the bedding flats, but they do sell them.

"We just don't feel like we have the space to do everything, so those get outsourced from a grower in

Michigan," Nathan said. "But we're growing most of what we sell, and we like that."

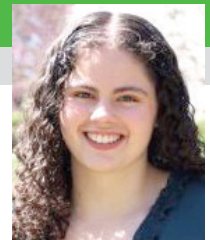
They have a production crew of about 10-12 employees, and during the spring, they have up to 50 full- and part-time workers.

"We've got some great help," Nathan said, adding that a lot of the employees come back every year.

He said he and his wife love to see generations of families shop at the business, adding that some repeat customers come from hours away.

Nathan said it's a little crazy leading up to each spring, but it's also a fun, enjoyable time. ✂

Cultivating an age-friendly campus



By MEGHAN EDWARDS
CIB contributor



The Community Advisory Panel for the University of Illinois' Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, & Technology program consists of older adults who provide input on research questions, help pilot new tools and applications, and serve as a valuable resource for faculty and students to conduct research and development activities with older adults, rather than for them.

As populations age, institutions across sectors are being challenged to rethink how they support longer, more diverse life courses. The Age-Friendly University initiative responds to this shift by encouraging institutions of higher education to create inclusive environments where people of all ages can learn, work and remain engaged.

According to the Age-Friendly University Global Network, the initiative was established in 2012 to support older adults in higher education. The framework promotes lifelong learning, intergenerational connection, workforce participation and community engagement, positioning universities as key partners in addressing the opportunities and challenges of an aging society.

The University of Illinois was designated as an Age-Friendly University in 2020. The application was endorsed by then-Chancellor Robert Jones and then-Provost Andreas Cangellaris, with additional support from Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell, dean of the College of Applied Health Sciences, who helped secure letters of endorsement from 14 deans and

six institute directors. This broad support reflects a truly university-wide commitment to the Age-Friendly University principles.

At the UI, the designation represents a dedication to building an inclusive, multigenerational campus where individuals of every age can learn, grow and share their experiences. The university promotes meaningful educational opportunities, cultural and wellness resources and research initiatives that reflect the realities of an aging society. By championing lifelong learning, equity, service and personal growth, the UI fosters a community where everyone belongs and everyone benefits.

These principles are facilitated through Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, & Technology, an interdisciplinary program that brings together faculty, community members, health care providers and industry partners to support positive and healthy aging through technology. Professor Wendy Rogers, who serves as program director, led the effort to bring the UI into the Age-Friendly University network.

CHART's work connects research,

innovation and education with real-world applications, aligning global age-friendly goals with the needs of the local community. Working under Coordinator Carrie Wennerdahl, its team is promoting Age-Friendly University activities across campus.

In addition to research and community partnerships, CHART hosts interns who collaborate with faculty and community partners on projects, support recruitment and data collection, and assist with outreach efforts. Through mentorship and interdisciplinary teamwork, students gain hands-on experience in research, community engagement and translational practice while deepening their understanding of older adults.

These internships prepare students for careers in health care, research and public health and reinforce the university's commitment to intergenerational learning and workforce development in an aging society. This semester's intern is Meghan Edwards, a senior majoring in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences who is working to promote the Age-Friendly University initiative and Dementia-Friendly communities.



Members of the CHART Community Advisory Panel get to work at a recent meeting.

Older adults engage at the UI through accessible learning, research and wellness programs. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and UI Extension offer in-person and virtual educational opportunities, supported by tuition waivers and the Senior Citizen Course Act. Intergenerational learning is central to this age-friendly approach, with CHART integrating older adults into courses and research programs connecting students and older adults to aging-related research. Health, wellness and social engagement are supported through initiatives such as the Lifetime Fitness

Program and campus arts and cultural activities.

The Age-Friendly University framework provides a valuable model for organizations in East Central Illinois as the regional workforce ages. Through research, education and cross-sector partnerships, the framework addresses the needs of an aging population by advancing health, independence and quality of life. By promoting lifelong learning, intergenerational engagement and research that supports well-being across the lifespan, the framework strengthens the UI's impact on

community and regional development.

Through efforts led by CHART and its partners, the Age-Friendly University initiative demonstrates how higher education can play a critical role in building an inclusive, resilient, and age-inclusive future for East Central Illinois and beyond. To learn more about CHART's research, partnerships and opportunities, visit its website at chart.ahs.illinois.edu for information on current projects, events, and ways to get involved.

Meghan Edwards is a senior at the University of Illinois and an intern with the Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, & Technology program.

Game Day Promos

Illinois Baseball & Softball

Baseball



TURN TWO TUESDAYS - \$1 WINGS (ORDERS OF 6) AND \$3 DOMESTIC DRAFTS

\$7 SLUSHEE BATS EVERY SUNDAY

MARCH 15 VS. MINNESOTA - PRE-PADDY'S DAY

APRIL 7 VS. INDIANA STATE - JERSEY KOOZIE GIVEAWAY

APRIL 17 VS. OREGON - 9 INNINGS OF WINNING

APRIL 24 VS. NEBRASKA - BLEACHER BUM BBQ

SOFTBALL



TRIPLE PLAY TUESDAY - PRETZEL, CANDY AND A DRINK FOR JUST \$10

\$7 WALKING TACOS EVERY WEDNESDAY

MARCH 18 VS. MISSOURI (DH) - BRAGGIN' RIGHTS

APRIL 7 VS. WESTERN ILLINOIS - WII SPORTS NIGHT

APRIL 25 VS. PENN STATE - WORLD'S LARGEST SOFTBALL TAILGATE

Visit FightingIllini.com/Promotions for more!

2101 FOX DRIVE
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CHAMPAIGN, IL
PERMIT NO. 880



Trust, Built Locally.
One promise kept at a
time.

R.W. Stoneworks- Morton, IL

