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June | July 2026
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These **LEADING LAWYERS** have been recommended by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois.

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Jeffrey I. Cisco	Cisco Law PC	Champaign	217.991.0409	Crim Def: DUI; Crim Def: Felon/Misdmmr; 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
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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/Constitutional; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Medical Mal Def; PI Def: General
Eric S. Chovanec	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Close/Private Held; Employment: Management; Labor: Management; 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; Insur/Ins Coverage/Reins; Medical Malpractice Def; PI Def: General
Kenneth D. Reifsteck	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Civil Appellate; Workers' Compensation Defense
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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 recommended 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.

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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
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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.

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From the editor's desk



Our series profiling the businesses that build us is chugging right

along this year.

This issue's cover story focuses on a company that is younger and smaller than some of the others we've featured, but whose footprint is growing rapidly.

Chances are, if you've enjoyed a Culver's butter burger or a slice of pizza at a Casey's General Store in our area, then Urbana-based ECI Construction Services probably oversaw its construction. They've also had a hand in remodeling several well-known hot spots in downtown Champaign.

We've also got a look at the Chrisman Frostop, which changed hands over the winter for the first time in more than 60 years. The new owners of the once-seasonal historic root beer stand on Illinois 1 have finished their renovations and plan to be open year-round.

Have a suggestion for others we should profile? I'd love to hear about it.

—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.

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From left, ECI Construction Services Project Manager Dan Hutton, CFO Aerika Hutton, co-founder and Vice President Jerry Tadlock and President Aaron Haunhorst are shown at the general contractor's facility in Urbana.

Photo by Rob Le Cates



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



Ricardo Diaz

STORY Jeff D'Alessio ♦ ♦ ♦ **PHOTOS** Rob Le Cates

A decade and change ago, we asked one of C-U's most impactful advocates for immigrants to finish this sentence: *This area would be an even better place to call home if it just had ...*

"A welcoming center," RICARDO DIAZ said at the time. "We have a lot of turnover in our town and it seems like different organizations are in constant flux. Why not show people in person to get an idea of recreation, where to volunteer, get medical care and mingle with locals?"

Two years later, the New American Welcome Center — which Diaz would later go on to direct — opened at the University YMCA.

A man of action, Diaz serves on the boards of the welcome center and CU Immigration Forum and

advocates for immigrants in his role as principal of XPenn Consultants.

He's an immigrant himself — having moved to the States at age 12 from Chihuahua, Mexico, with his mom and five siblings. After studying at New Mexico State, BYU and Penn, where he met wife Lisa, Diaz embarked on a career in academia that brought him to C-U.

He was 33 when he felt compelled to shift direction and "*do more.*"

Diaz, the recipient of the James R. Burgess Jr.-Susan Freiburg Humanitarian Award at 2021's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Countywide Celebration, took time out to answer questions from Editor Jeff D'Alessio in the 332nd installment of our weekly speed read spotlighting leaders of organizations big and small.



I can't live without my ... reading time. I love to catch up on news from various sources and then delve deeper through podcasts when only my hands are busy. Oh, and I need to be in Mexico at least once a year: food, family and resetting my attitude about what is hard.

The hardest thing about being a leader is ... discerning when I'm making a contribution based on a limited sample of the input. I don't mind making my own observations but often people think

I've already made up my mind and so they hesitate to contribute.

The three adjectives I hope my staff would use to describe me are ... open, thoughtful and caring.

My favorite moments in this job happen ... when we have people return and we've impacted their lives positively. Also, in 2006, when a call during a rally came from the senator's office: "You wanted our attention, you have it."

On my office walls, you'll find ... books, pigs and Post-its — lots of them.

My professional role model is ... Stephen Covey, whose seminar based on spiritual roots of human relations cost me \$15. That he charged thousands later made me feel like I got another bargain.

My one unbreakable rule of the workplace is ... share your view. *Chi tace consente.* ("If you're quiet, you are agreeing.")

I'm frugal in that ... I often ask: Is this a necessity or a wish? I do act as a Silent Generation guy but only because there's no sense in generating new ways of saving if we don't reuse and recycle consistently. Clutter is better than paying for things all over again.

The single-most important question I ask job candidates during interviews is ... what is your ikigai? What gets you up when you don't have to?

I wind down after work by ... checking on my plants, inside or out, and listening to a podcast.

For lunch, I like to ... eat leftovers, especially from a previous restaurant dinner. Fine food is great, but the best food is often on the street or in a humble home.

The last luxury in which I indulged

was when ... three in my family just tasted Taipei, Korea (Busan and Seoul) and several cities and seashores in Japan. When I related to my son that I now understood why people called Mexico underdeveloped, he retorts: "Dad, compared to this, we are underdeveloped in the U.S."

The most beneficial college class I took was ... macroeconomics. The professor I hired for my students at the ITESM (Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education) business school in Mexico City left me wanting reincarnation so I could start over.

The last good book I read was ... "Naples '44," by Norman Lewis. I cross-checked with other books and I learned that getting into wars or occupations without a definite plan causes lots of suffering and waste.

I'm presently returning to Erich Fromm in "The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness." Figuring out why I can believe with hope in the midst of the current reality.

For exercise ... I'm getting back into doing everyday calisthenics. I can't run consistently any more, so I jump rope or walk.

The first job I ever had was ... selling my grandma's bread on the street and shoe shining. My little brother and me, I must have been 8. We also sold candy, paletas — anything to help.

As far as my worst job goes ... I love work, but I appreciate making my own path. My worst university job was working under someone who loved the aesthetics and did not care for the spirit of the work. I felt like a bird with wings trimmed. ✂

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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

- Sunrun Installation Services, rooftop solar at 607 Irvine Road, \$42,669.08.
- Polar Block Sales Inc., window replacements at 2519 Brett Court, \$28,200.
- Creekside Construction Services, LLC, interior office renovations at 2021 S. First St., Unit Ste. 204, \$59,145.
- Palomino Construction and Renovations, LLC, apartment remodels at 202 E. John St., \$78,700.
- Kennedy Builders, LLC, repair/rebuild of single-family dwelling at 706 Fairway Drive, \$725,000.
- ECI Construction Services, remodeling and dividing space at 100 Trade Center Drive, Unit Ste. 201, \$142,055.42.
- Polar Block Sales Inc., window replacement at 2003 O'Donnell Drive, \$30,000.
- Greg Guerin, restaurant alteration at 60 E. Green St., \$448,977.
- Freedom Roofing & Construction, Inc., roof replacement at 1511 Grandview Drive, \$28,000.
- DECA Improvements, roof replacement at 1115 Baytowne Drive, \$40,290.
- Agile Construction Services, office alterations at 102 N. Neil St., \$26,242.
- Bash Pepper Roofing, roof replacement at 1504 S. Prospect Ave., \$30,654.57.
- Miller Enterprises, demolition at 301 S. Country Fair Drive, \$134,550.
- Dodds Company ASPCA, interior remodel at 1806 Fox Drive, \$467,697.
- Wendell Wolken Construction, hair salon remodel at 2213 S. Neil St., \$54,050.
- Myefski Architects, footing and foundation at 306 S. Second St., \$2,220,450.
- JSM Development Services, LLC, remodel of medical offices at 819 Bloomington Road, \$520,100.
- Helitech, foundation repairs at 2323 Greenwood Court, \$25,445.67.

- GreenGrids, rooftop solar at 2907 Wendover Place, \$29,664.
- Off Grid Energy Solutions LLC, DBA Aveyo, rooftop solar at 606 Phillips Drive, \$32,697.20.
- GreenGrids, rooftop solar at 1103 Alton Drive, \$34,739.50.
- Hallbeck Homes Inc., new single-family home at 1502 Wyndemere Point Drive, \$1,900,000.
- Magnet Maintenance, electrical fire repair at 3307 W. Daniel St., \$116,928.85.
- AM Construction & Development, multi-family stair and balcony repairs at 211 E. John St., \$50,000.
- MMLP Ltd., Goodwill store remodel at 912 W. Anthony Drive, \$167,483.
- Architectural Expressions, LLP, new outdoor building and expansion of pickleball complex at 2203 W. John St., \$2,008,200.
- Woods Basement Systems, foundation repairs at 2308 Branch Road, \$12,203.10.
- Andrew Fell Architecture and Design, Chop House on Main restaurant buildout at 2 Main St., \$108,650.
- KAP Architecture LLC, multi-family with first-floor retail at 2443 Village Green Place, \$10,224,592.
- McCormick Service, add three-hour fire barrier and partial change of use at 3402 N. Mattis Ave., \$583,103.

MAHOMET

- Jackson Quality Construction Inc., porch at 1213 Farm Lake Drive, \$50,000.
- Sun Structure Designs, addition at 108 W. State St., \$59,032.
- Aly Jackson, renovations at 402 E. Main St., \$70,000.
- Lindsay Sullivan, swimming pool at 204-206 Ranch Lane, \$153,470.
- Christian Rilea, fit out/renovations at 307 N. Prairieview Road, \$950,000.
- Steven Reid, solar installation at 508 Richard Court, \$46,000.
- Scott Pearce, swimming pool at 1805 S. Orchard Drive, \$100,000.

- Rave Homes, new residential construction application for 201 Collins Drive, \$480,000.

RANTOUL

- A&R Mechanical, mechanical work at 200 E. Champaign Ave., \$189,470.
- Erie Construction, ACC/roofing at 1080 Pinecrest Drive, \$53,371.
- FBI Buildings, commercial building at 1140 N. Century Blvd., \$687,000.
- Baldovin Construction, plan review at 205 E. Frost Ave., \$435,680.
- Commercial renovation at 109 S. Garrard St., \$140,165.

SAVOY

- Ohana Pools Spas & Billiards, building work at 403 E. Tomaras Ave., \$88,000.
- Roof Panther, building work at 609 Lake Falls Blvd., \$28,850.
- Bratcher Heating & Air, mechanical work at 503 Cayman Way, \$37,920.
- Nyadaro Homes, building work at 505 Harpers Ferry, \$440,000.

URBANA

- Christopher Sean Jenkins, accessory structure at 1702 N. Willow Road, \$35,000.
- Copper Creek Contractors, alteration/renovation/remodel at 905 S. Race St., \$25,000.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 901 E. Harmon St., \$57,477.36.
- Sunrun Installation Services, solar installation at 1316 S. Abercorn St., \$42,322.50.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 2401 S. Stricker Lane, \$50,187.20.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 1402 S. Race St., \$28,244.
- Dinham Transport LLC, new commercial construction at 2410 N. Cunningham Ave., \$250,000.
- Duce Construction Company, alteration/renovation/remodel at 1203 W. Green St., \$175,000.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 1409 S. Abercorn St., \$72,720.36.
- Lipa Enterprises, Inc., roof replacement, repair or replace sheathing at 402 E. Willard St., \$30,000.
- Vonderheide Construction Inc., additions at 714 W. Iowa St., \$279,000.
- SolQ LLC, solar installation at 2006 S. Vine St., \$57,000.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 1001 S. Austin Drive, \$66,662.16.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 302 W. Pennsylvania Ave., \$69,966.72.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 1406 E. Scovill St., \$57,973.56.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 2208 S. Cottage Grove Ave., \$59,135.52.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 2014 S. Silver Court West, \$78,323.88.
- Sunrun Installation Services, solar installation at 1110 W. Church St., \$28,823.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 504 N. Beringer Circle, \$171,483.12.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 2918 S. Susan Stone Drive, \$27,801.20.
- Tron Solar LLC, solar installation at 2308 E. Country Squire Drive, \$52,877.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 2702 N. Skyline Drive, \$30,781.90.
- Spartan X, solar installation at 1107 E. Silver St., \$37,624.80.
- Marion County Horizon Center, alteration/renovation/remodel at 1909 E. Washington St., \$28,000.
- Habitat for Humanity, new single-family dwelling at 1209 W. Beslin St., \$135,000.
- Nyadaro Homes, new single-family dwelling at 2813 E. Clarion Road, \$296,390.
- Tron Solar LLC, solar installation at 1202 A E. Silver St., \$36,263.
- Route 66 Solar, solar installation at 407 E. Sunnycrest Court West, \$27,000.
- Sunrun Installation Services, solar installation at 1810 E. Summit Drive, \$25,393.50. ✕

Seeking more space

CU Aerospace co-founder and President David Carroll explains how one of the company's machines creates tiny components for mechanisms at its facility at Champaign's Interstate Research Park.

Company looking to open second facility that will focus on development, production

STORY Jana Wiersema

PHOTOS Rob Le Cates

URBANA

An aerospace technology company founded by University of Illinois faculty nearly 30 years ago is looking to expand its footprint.

CU Aerospace, located in Champaign's Interstate Research Park, is looking to lease a vacant building at 4808 N. Cunningham Ave., Urbana, and dedicate the facility to production, said co-founder and President David Carroll.

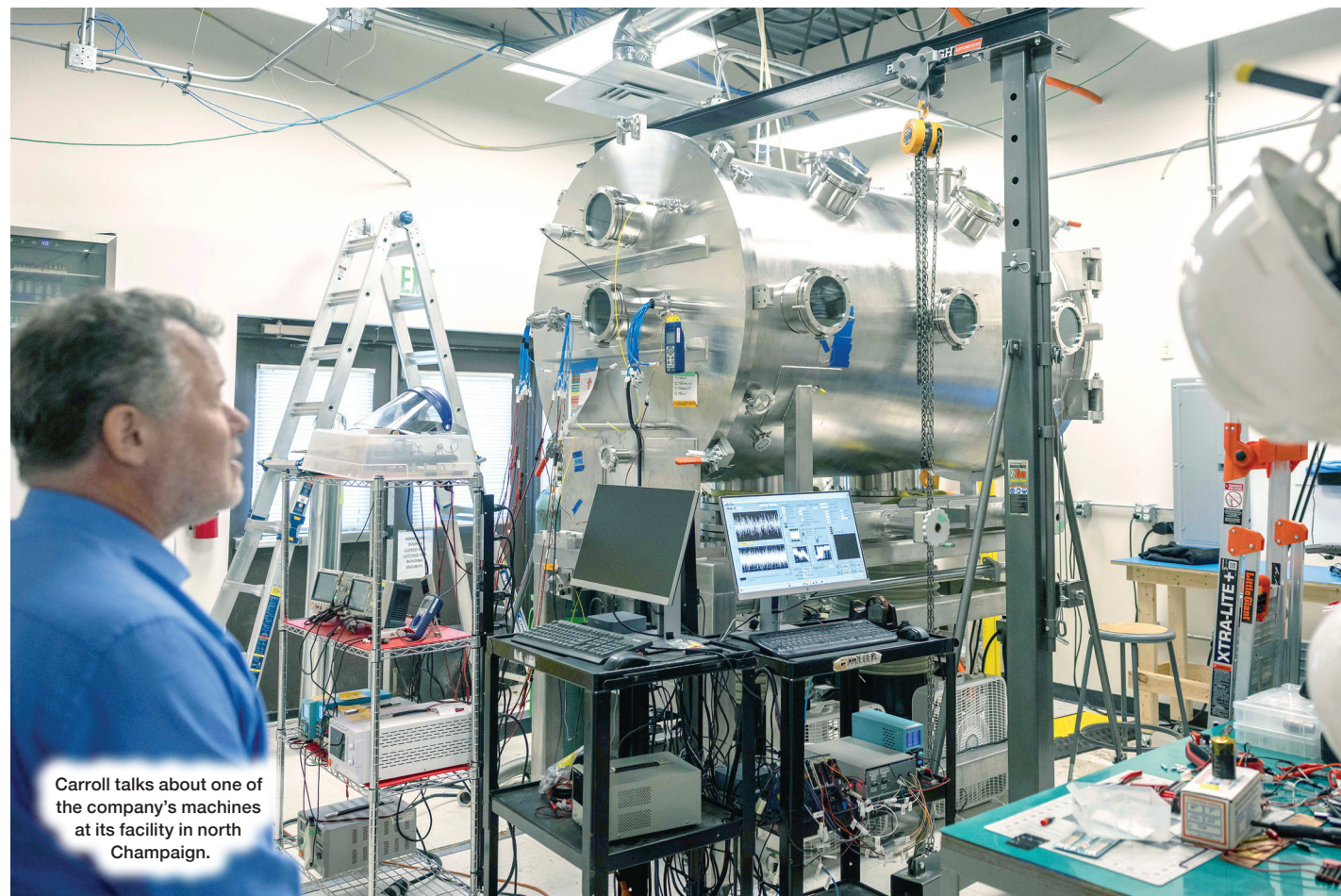
"We're very excited to have the new, expanded facility," he said. "... Quality management is going to be very important, and being able to meet the needs of

customers to their design specs and be able to make space-rated parts, those are all really critical factors for us."

He said that moving into the space will likely be a "gradual process" involving renovations that could take a couple months. The company will then move over equipment from the research park site such as computer-controlled machines and lathes.

If a lease is signed this month, the site could be up and running with existing equipment by mid- to late August, Carroll estimated.

"Then the plan is to order some newer, more capable machines to be able to produce larger parts," he said.



Carroll talks about one of the company's machines at its facility in north Champaign.

He added that CU Aerospace plans to keep its existing location as well.

The move is contingent on whether property owner Payne's Pride LLC receives approval to have the site and neighboring parcels — which are technically located in Somer Township — rezoned from General Business to Light Industry. According to Champaign County Planning and Zoning Director John Hall, the zoning board of appeals voted recently to recommend that the county board approve the request.

"At this point in our history, we are primarily doing development and manufacturing of small propulsion systems for small satellites," Carroll said. "So this is not big-boomer SpaceX rockets; this is propulsion systems for the satellite once they're in space."

For the first half of the company's 28-year history, a lot of its focus has been on research and development,

and the focus is now on development and production, he added.

"Right now, we have two (thruster systems) in space that we're getting flight heritage on, meaning we're actually firing them on a satellite and taking data," Carroll said. "So now we're at this cusp where we can, the aerospace industry opens up and (says), 'Oh, OK, these guys have flight heritage. Their thruster was successful while in orbit. I can have enough confidence that I can now buy their thrusters and put them on my spacecraft.'"

The company would like the production capacity to fill larger orders for thruster systems, but there isn't enough space for this at its existing site, he said.

According to a memo from CU Aerospace Laboratory Director Darren King to county officials, the company's current location has 10,000 square feet

comprising about 2,000 square feet of office space, 2,500 square feet of lab space, a 600-square-foot machine shop and about 4,900 square feet for various "common uses."

On the other hand, the building at 4808 N. Cunningham Ave., Urbana, has about 16,000 square feet, with only about 800 square feet going to office space.

"Plentiful open space will allow us to build out dedicated production spaces in well-organized zones," King said. "We plan to start with three or four CNC machines (mills and lathes) and add more (along with machine operators) as production needs ramp up. We plan to erect a small clean room for precision cleaning these parts as well. It is our intent to insulate and fully air-condition the production space. Future plans include the integration of thermal vacuum and vibration table test setups."

"With the additional manufacturing capacity, we would be able to take jobs from other companies around the country and produce parts for other companies — with a priority on our own stuff, but it gives us additional capability," Carroll said.

In terms of staff, he hopes to add at least one new position this year and two next year.

The move to expand production capacity comes as the company is working on multiple projects of note.

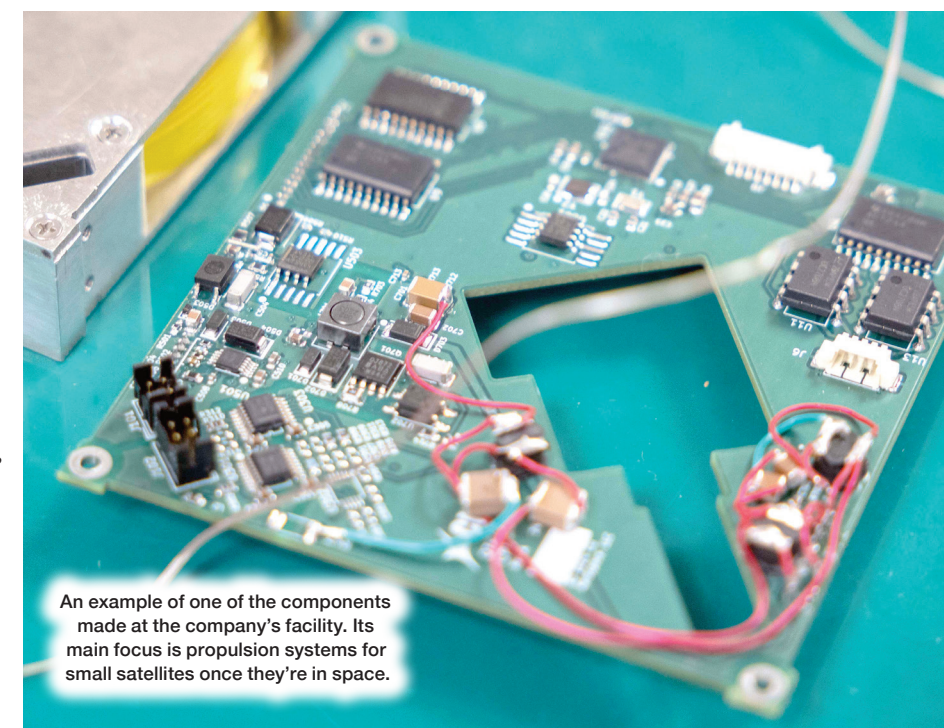
In 2019, CU Aerospace received a Tipping Point grant from NASA for the design, fabrication, launch and in-space demonstration of the DUPLEX CubeSat, company officials said. The award is part of the agency's "Moon to Mars" exploration approach.

The satellite will test two of the company's micropropulsion systems in space, thereby providing flight heritage for both. The DUPLEX was deployed into low Earth orbit from the International Space Station in December 2025, according to NASA.

The two technologies — the Fiber-fed Pulsed Plasma Thruster system and the Monofilament Vaporization Propulsion thruster system — both use polymer filaments "spooled up like a fishing line" as their propellants, Carroll noted.

"The primary advantage is there's no pressure vessel and there's no expensive microvalves that could leak," he explained. "... Whenever a rocket is launching a satellite, if the satellite has a typical propulsion, that's going to have like a 3,000 psi storage tank of gas of some sort or liquid propellant or something, which could potentially, if there gets to be a crack or something, you could potentially have an explosion. In our case, there's no possibility of a catastrophic explosion from the thruster system."

"As these systems are demonstrated in space, we expect orders from industry



An example of one of the components made at the company's facility. Its main focus is propulsion systems for small satellites once they're in space.

to start accelerating," King said. "Early sales for our Fiber-fed Pulsed Plasma Thruster system prove the commercial appeal of this new technology, and flight heritage is anticipated to bring significant attention to FPPT's capability and value."

Additionally, the company was recently awarded a contract with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to develop and fly an

"air-breathing, very low Earth orbit propulsion system," Carroll said.

"It is a satellite that actually, on the front end, it ingests air from the upper atmosphere and then feeds that air to our propulsion system as the propellant," he explained. "So what that allows you to do is just keep flying, because you're not carrying any propellant on board that would eventually run out." X



By LAURA WEIS
CIB contributor

Why applicants ghost interviews

Sometimes, I cannot help myself. I have opinions, and I share them even though I know no one cares. Even worse, I get sucked into doing so on social media (honestly, be better than me and don't do this).

I belong to a Facebook group focused on human resources, and a recent post asked a simple but important question: Why are candidates applying for jobs, scheduling interviews, then not showing up? The question wasn't accusatory. It was curious. The employer genuinely wanted to understand whether the issue was competing offers, transportation challenges, unclear expectations or something deeper about how hiring has changed.

I put in my 2 cents. In a nutshell, I said that to get to a meaningful answer, you have to look beyond the missed interview and step into the candidate's experience. I believe this behavior is rarely about a single moment; rather, it's about a pattern of exhaustion.

The current job search doesn't look the way it did even a few years ago. Candidates aren't applying to one or two roles and thoughtfully progressing through each process. Many are applying to dozens, sometimes hundreds of positions. Not because they're careless, but because they feel they have no choice. The market is competitive, automated tracking systems are making it harder and more time-consuming, employer responses are inconsistent, and silence from employers is still common enough that candidates assume they need volume just to get traction.

Let's consider what happens after an applicant hits "apply."

For many roles, applying is no longer a quick submission. It often involves uploading a resume, then manually re-entering the same information. It may require tailoring each resume to each opening, answering custom questions, tailoring responses, or completing assessments before a human ever reviews the application. Now multiply that across hundreds of applications.

If the candidate moves forward, the interview process can become its own beast. They might start with a phone screening, then a video screening, then a second screening that feels similar to the first, then a panel interview, then a meeting with the hiring manager, then wait for an offer. Along the way, they may be asked to complete a take-home assignment that takes several hours, often without a clear understanding of what is being evaluated or the tools needed to complete it. All of this unfolds while they are likely applying to other positions and managing other interviews, current employment or personal responsibilities.

From the employer's perspective, each step may feel reasonable, even necessary. But candidates aren't experiencing your process in isolation. They're experiencing it layered on top of every other process they are navigating at the same time. That is where fatigue sets in — and this is particularly true for the unemployed who have been in the market for a long time.

When people are overwhelmed, they try to conserve energy. They make quicker decisions. A candidate who scheduled an interview earlier in the week may accept another offer before then. They may revisit the job description and realize it's not the right fit. They may simply run out of bandwidth to engage in another multi-step process.

Instead of formally withdrawing, they disappear. It's not ideal, and it's not professional in the traditional sense. But it is increasingly common, and more importantly, it's understandable when viewed in context. In many cases, ghosting isn't about disrespect; it's about emotional and physical depletion.

There is a growing gap between what employers intend and what candidates experience. Employers may be adding steps to ensure better hiring decisions, reduce bias or involve key stakeholders, but to candidates, that can feel repetitive, unclear or unnecessarily long.

For employers, multiple interviews can feel like due diligence, but for the candidate, it can feel like the same conversation over and over. Depending on which side of the table you are on, take-home assignments can be seen as a fair way to assess skills or as unpaid work with no guarantee of return. Many applicants are applying for multiple positions daily. If three employers each ask for a two- or three-hour project, suddenly a candidate is investing an entire weekend into unpaid work with no guarantee of an offer.

There's also a trust factor. Candidates may wonder whether the assignment is truly a skills assessment or whether they're being asked to provide ideas, strategies, marketing plans, writing samples or solutions that the company could potentially use without ever hiring them. Whether that's fair or not, it's a perception.

Candidates are making judgments about your organization long before an offer is extended. The hiring process is your first impression, and in many cases, it's the deciding factor in whether they stay engaged. Employers should be aware that their reputation plays a role. Candidates are sharing their experiences on sites such as Glassdoor and LinkedIn. Those stories, fair or not, shape expectations. If a process is known to be long, unclear or demanding, candidates may opt out before it even begins.

None of this means employers should lower their standards or accept poor behavior. But it does mean there is an opportunity to adjust, and organizations should review their process and ask whether each step truly adds value. By simplifying where possible, being more transparent earlier and ensuring candidates understand what to expect, the employer can reduce redundancy so each interaction has a clear purpose.

It's important to acknowledge that not every missed interview reflects the employer's process. Sometimes it is simply a poor fit or a lack of follow-through. But when no-shows become a pattern, it's worth stepping back and asking a different question. A solid hiring team will ask, "What does it feel like to go through our hiring process?" That could shift the perspective and the process.

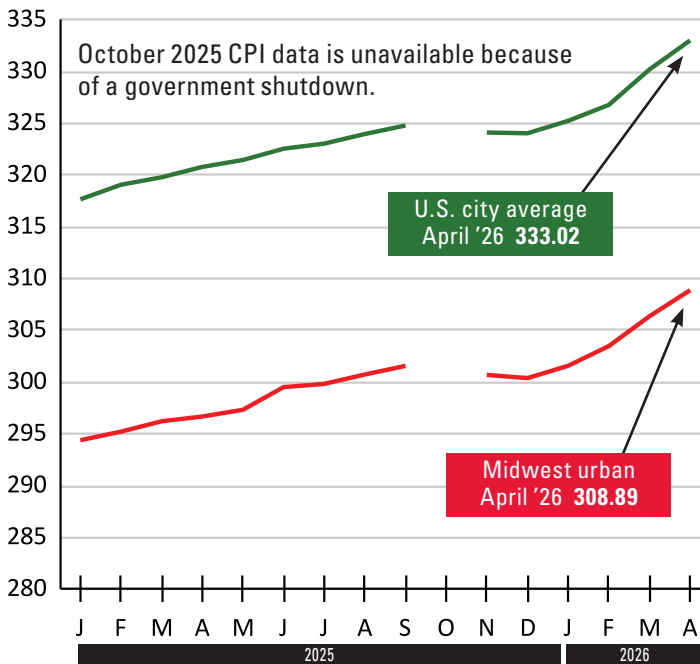
Candidates today aren't just evaluating the job itself. They are evaluating their interaction with your organization, and that starts with the application. If that experience feels overly complicated, slow or unclear, they may disengage before you ever have the chance to tell your story. An employer's goal shouldn't be to create a perfect process. It should be to create a thoughtful one that leads to quality hires. ✂

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

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			
April '26	March '26	Change	
\$584,615.51	\$551,395.58	▲	6.02%
YEAR-TO-DATE TOTALS			
2026	2025	Change	
\$1,703,561.53	\$1,513,857.42	▲	12.53%

Source: Cities of Champaign and Urbana

Unemployment rates for Central Illinois counties, state and nation

County	Labor Force	Jobless	April '26 (%)	March '26 (%)	April '25 (%)	Change Month (%)	Change Year (%)
Champaign	110,051	4,254	3.9	4.6	3.1	▼ -0.7	▲ 0.8
Coles	24,216	815	3.4	4.1	2.9	▼ -0.7	▲ 0.5
Douglas	9,831	323	3.3	4.2	2.9	▼ -0.9	▲ 0.4
Edgar	7,823	317	4.1	4.8	3.1	▼ -0.7	▲ 1.0
Ford	6,531	240	3.7	4.7	3.4	▼ -1.0	▲ 0.3
Iroquois	11,518	539	4.7	6.0	4.1	▼ -1.3	▲ 0.6
Macon	43,099	2,413	5.6	6.7	5.1	▼ -1.1	▲ 0.5
McLean	91,623	3,372	3.7	4.5	3.1	▼ -0.8	▲ 0.6
Moultrie	6,857	229	3.3	4.2	3.0	▼ -0.9	▲ 0.3
Piatt	8,820	268	3.0	4.1	2.8	▼ -1.1	▲ 0.2
Vermilion	30,018	1,561	5.2	6.3	4.6	▼ -1.1	▲ 0.6
Region	350,387	14,331	4.0	4.9	3.5	▼ -0.9	▲ 0.5
State	6,452,358	306,351	4.7	5.2	4.2	▼ -0.5	▲ 0.5
U.S.	169,548,000	6,768,000	4.0	4.3	3.9	▼ -0.3	▲ 0.1

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

CU MTD ridership

	April '26	April '25	Change
Adults	17,539	20,632	▼ -15.0%
School	42,339	45,721	▼ -7.4%
DASH/Senior	31,010	31,780	▼ -2.4%
Annual pass	56,431	52,097	▲ 8.3%
UI faculty/staff	23,535	22,877	▲ 2.9%
UI student	1,146,773	1,087,805	▲ 5.4%
Monthly total	1,346,521	1,284,441	▲ 4.2%
Fiscal YTD*	10,659,504	10,242,739	▲ 4.1%

* Fiscal year runs July 2025 through June 2026.

Crop progress

Released June 8, 2026, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Grain	June 7, 2026	2025	'21-25 avg.		
Illinois corn planted	96%	96%	95%		
Illinois corn emerged	88%	88%	90%		
Illinois soybeans planted	93%	90%	91%		
Illinois soybeans emerged	84%	80%	80%		
Winter wheat headed	95%	97%	97%		
	VP	Poor	Fair	Good	Xlt
Illinois corn condition	1%	4%	28%	55%	12%
Illinois soybeans condition	1%	4%	31%	52%	12%

Source: USDA

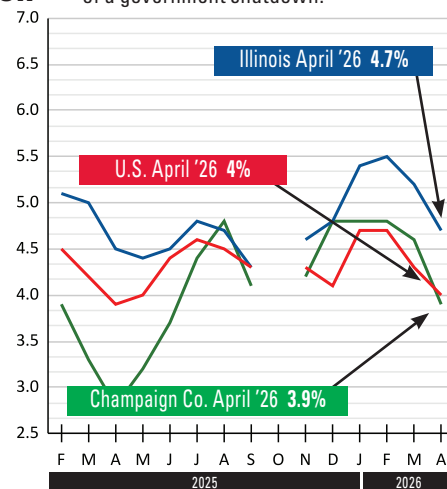
Prices at the pump

Average price per gallon of regular unleaded gas as of June 9, 2026.

Area	April '26	April '25
Bloomington-Normal	\$4.42	\$3.18
Champaign-Urbana	\$4.46	\$3.21
Chicago	\$5.02	\$3.81
Danville	\$4.41	\$3.19
Decatur	\$4.23	\$3.16
Illinois	\$4.52	\$3.35
U.S.	\$4.16	\$3.12

Source: AAA

October 2025 data is unavailable because of a government shutdown.



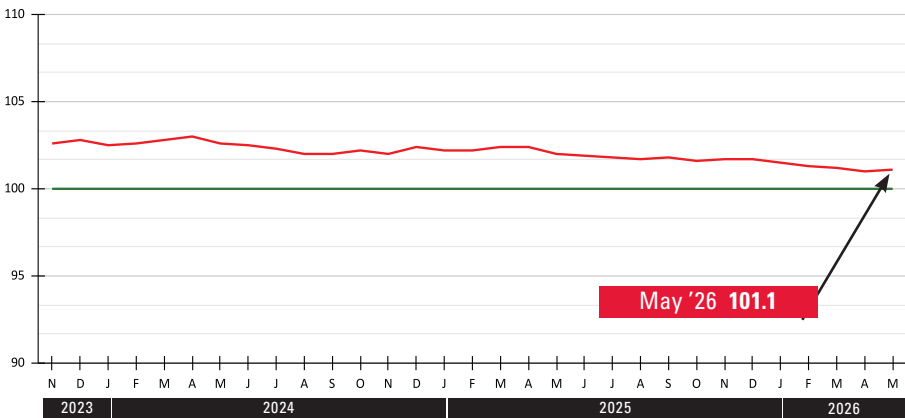
University of Illinois flash index

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	Units sold			Median sales price		
	1Q '26	1Q '25	Pct. Change	1Q '26	1Q '25	Pct. Change
Champaign	374	381	▼ -1.8%	\$227,625	\$233,000	▼ -2.3%
Coles	96	87	▲ 10.3%	\$156,475	\$128,500	▲ 21.8%
Douglas	30	33	▼ -9.1%	\$128,000	\$145,000	▼ -11.7%
Edgar	20	23	▼ -13.0%	\$78,500	\$85,000	▼ -7.6%
Ford	31	22	▲ 40.9%	\$138,750	\$147,500	▼ -5.9%
Iroquois	35	42	▼ -16.7%	\$139,000	\$150,000	▼ -7.3%
Macon	249	260	▼ -4.2%	\$120,000	\$137,000	▼ -12.4%
McLean	332	344	▼ -3.5%	\$250,000	\$230,000	▲ 8.7%
Moultrie	36	23	▲ 56.5%	\$165,000	\$112,500	▲ 46.7%
Piatt	45	39	▲ 15.4%	\$203,000	\$190,000	▲ 6.8%
Vermilion	135	127	▲ 6.3%	\$123,500	\$111,825	▲ 10.4%
Illinois	24,179	25,169	▼ -3.9%	\$300,000	\$287,000	▲ 4.5%

Source: Illinois Association of Realtors

Willard Airport passenger totals

Monthly totals	April '26	March '26	Change
Enplanements	7,435	7,473	▼ -1%
YTD totals	2026	2025	Change
Enplanements	27,218	26,415	▲ 0.03%
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 June 4, 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. June '26	U.S. June '25
30-year fixed	6.48%	6.85%
15-year fixed	5.79%	5.99%

Source: Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp.

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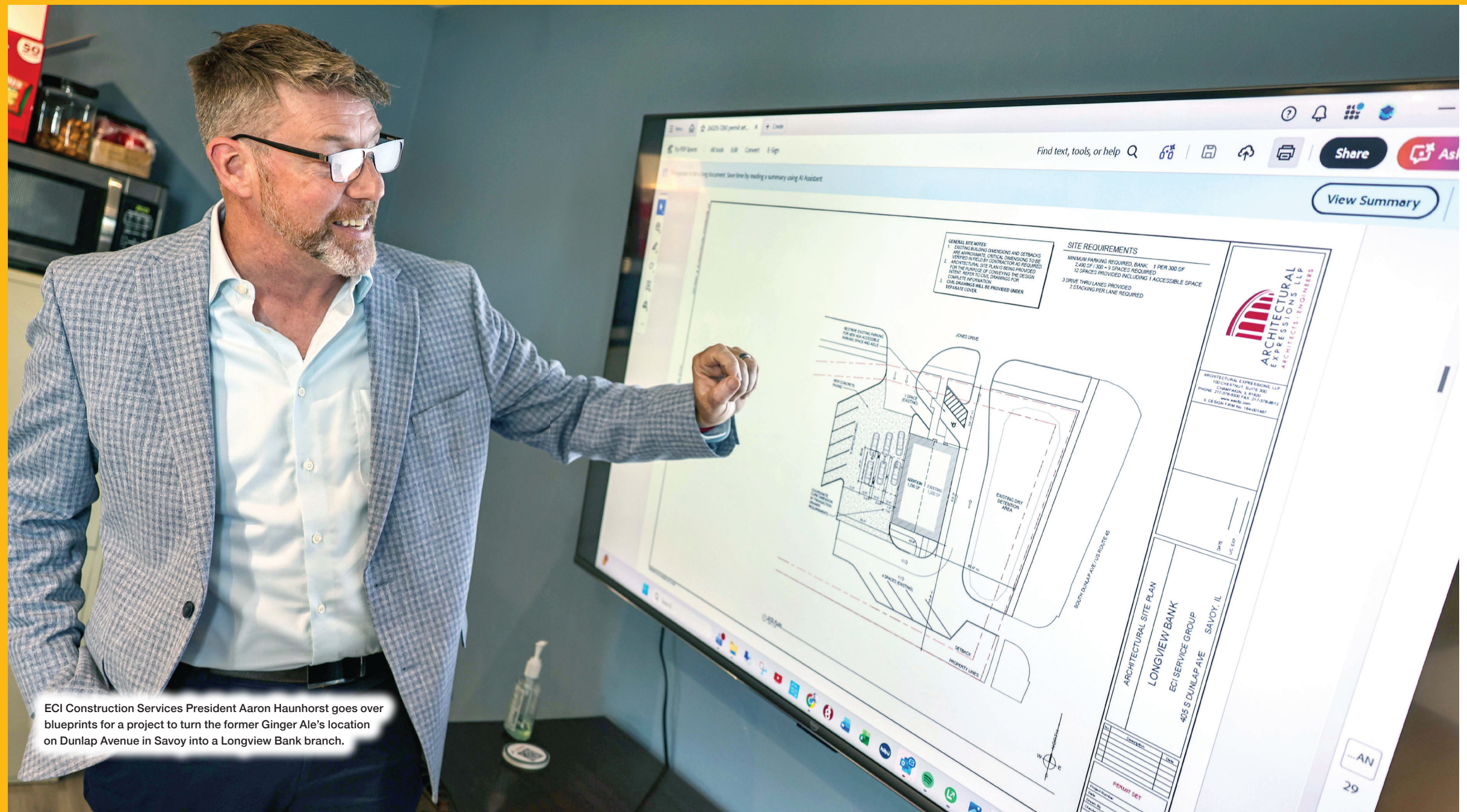
CHAMPAIGN DECATUR SPRINGFIELD

EXPANDING THEIR MENU

Small-but-mighty contractor has had a hand in many of the area's best places to eat, drink and be merry

STORY Carol Roehm
PHOTOS Rob Le Gates

URBANA
Urbana-based ECI Construction Services might be small, but the 10-person commercial general contractor has been the construction partner for some of the best-known and beloved establishments in the Midwest. Every time someone in East Central Illinois enjoys a Culver's butter burger or a slice of Casey's pizza, they have ECI Construction to thank for managing the construction of their closest location.



ECI Construction Services President Aaron Haunhorst goes over blueprints for a project to turn the former Ginger Ale's location on Dunlap Avenue in Savoy into a Longview Bank branch.

ECI has been involved with improving the communities in which its team members and their families live — whether it is working on new construction, interior remodeling and renovation projects; supporting community programs; or mentoring the next generation of skilled-trades workers in local classrooms and through pre-apprenticeship classes at its Urbana office.

Founded in 2000 as TCT Construction by Paul Tatman, David Crow and Jerry Tadlock, the firm was renamed ECI Construction Services following Tatman’s departure in January 2006 and Crow’s retirement in September 2022.

ECI’s leadership team includes President Aaron Haunhorst and Chief Financial Officer Aerika Hutton, who both joined the company in 2017. In addition to 10 employees, the company also works with 10 to 15 subcontractors that could add another 50 to 70 tradespeople at a job site.

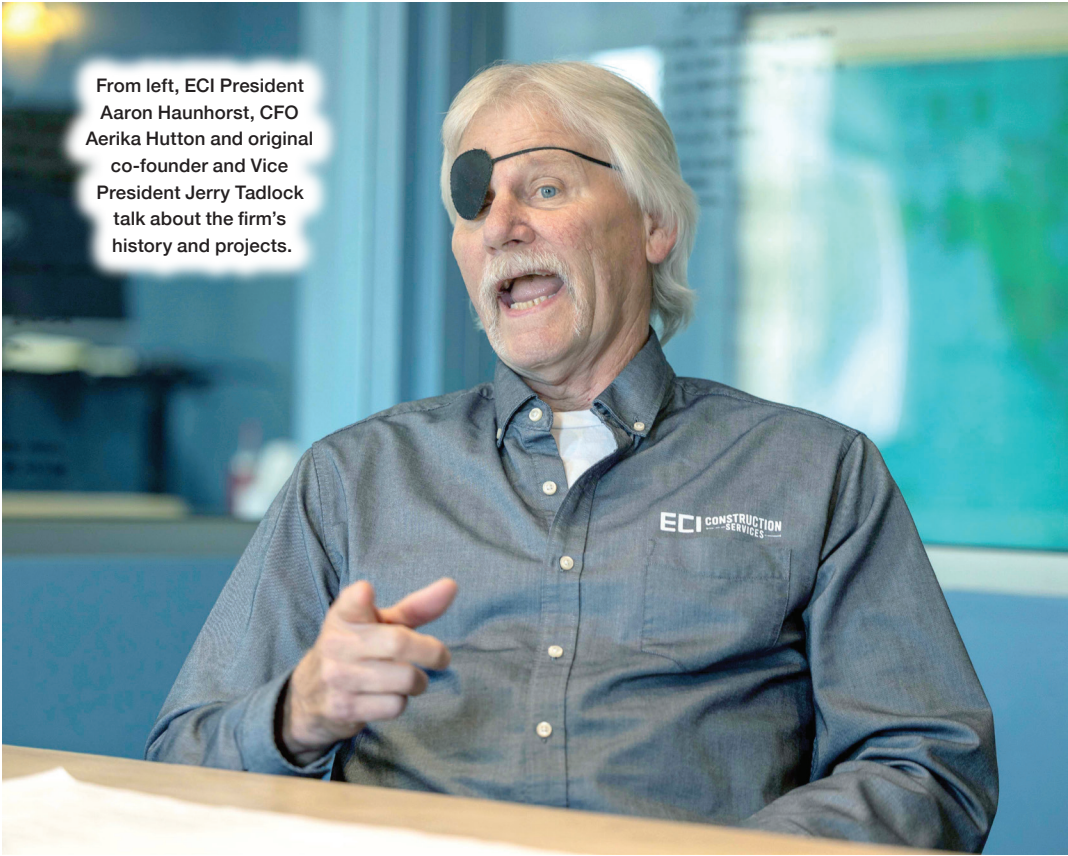
Tadlock, one of the original founders, now serves as vice president. He said even after working on more than 60 remodeling and new-building construction projects, he still loves what he does.

“I enjoy the aspect of going out and starting a project from nothing,” he said. “I enjoy the challenge of it.”

ECI’s projects span a broad range of markets, including retail, office, industrial, healthcare, hospitality, restaurant, multifamily and travel-center construction.

In the early years of the company, Tadlock recalls spending three years in the Chicago area designing and constructing strip malls and Central Illinois Bank locations.

During the past decade, ECI’s focus has been on projects throughout East Central Illinois, with Culver’s and Casey’s General



Store being the largest clients.

“Culver’s has its own architects and engineers, but they hire local general contractors to be on site,” Haunhorst said.

“ECI has built all of the Culver’s in East Central Illinois, except for Rantoul,” Hutton said, referring to the chain’s Champaign, Urbana, Mahomet and Tilton locations.

During construction of the Urbana Culver’s on University Avenue, which opened in fall 2019, ECI demonstrated its commitment to the environment by carefully working around the rare and historic trees protected by the city’s Legacy Tree Program.

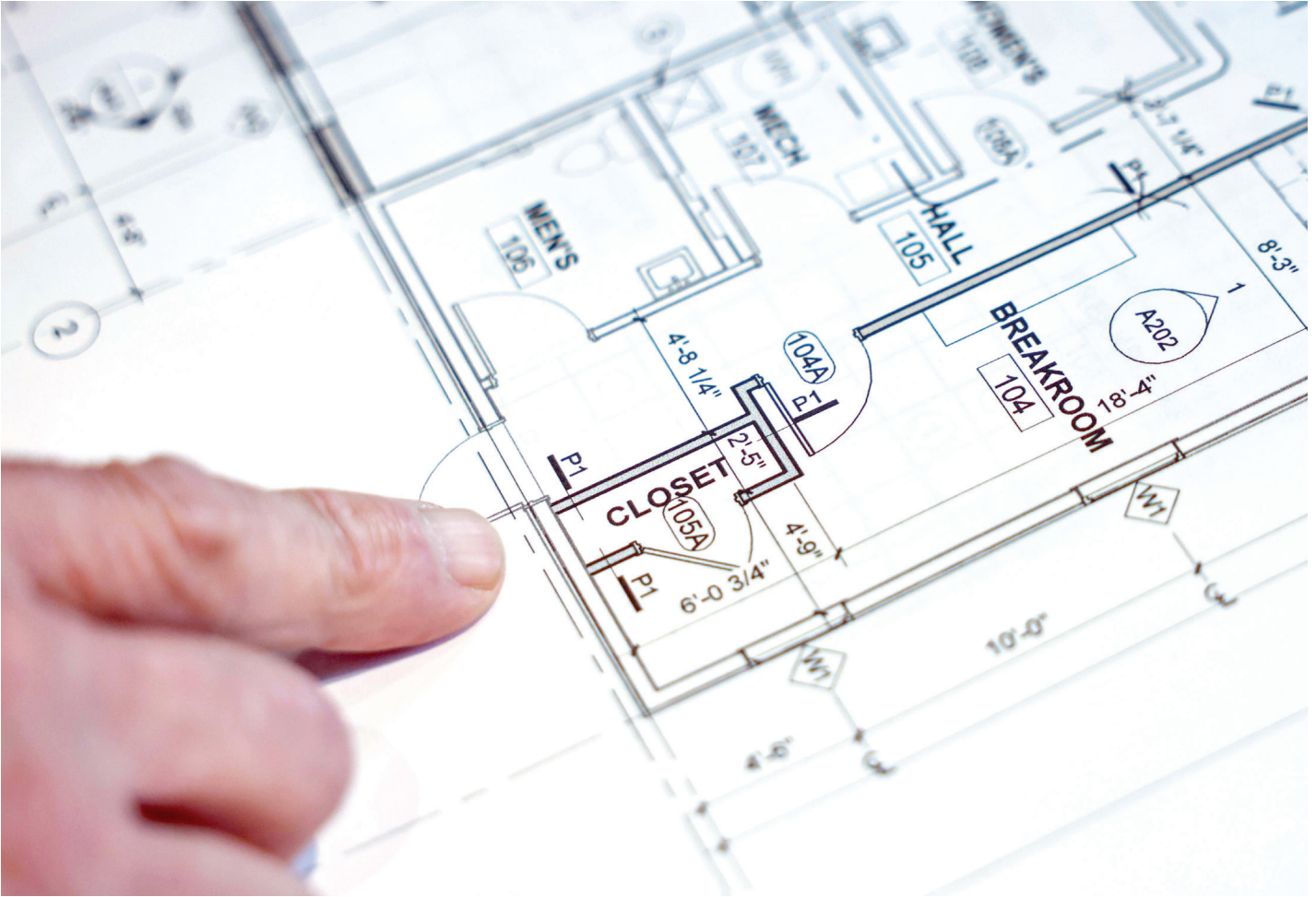
“There are ‘legacy trees’ in Urbana, and there were three of them — 100-year-old oak trees — at the Culver’s construction site,” Haunhorst said. “One tree was where the kitchen is.”

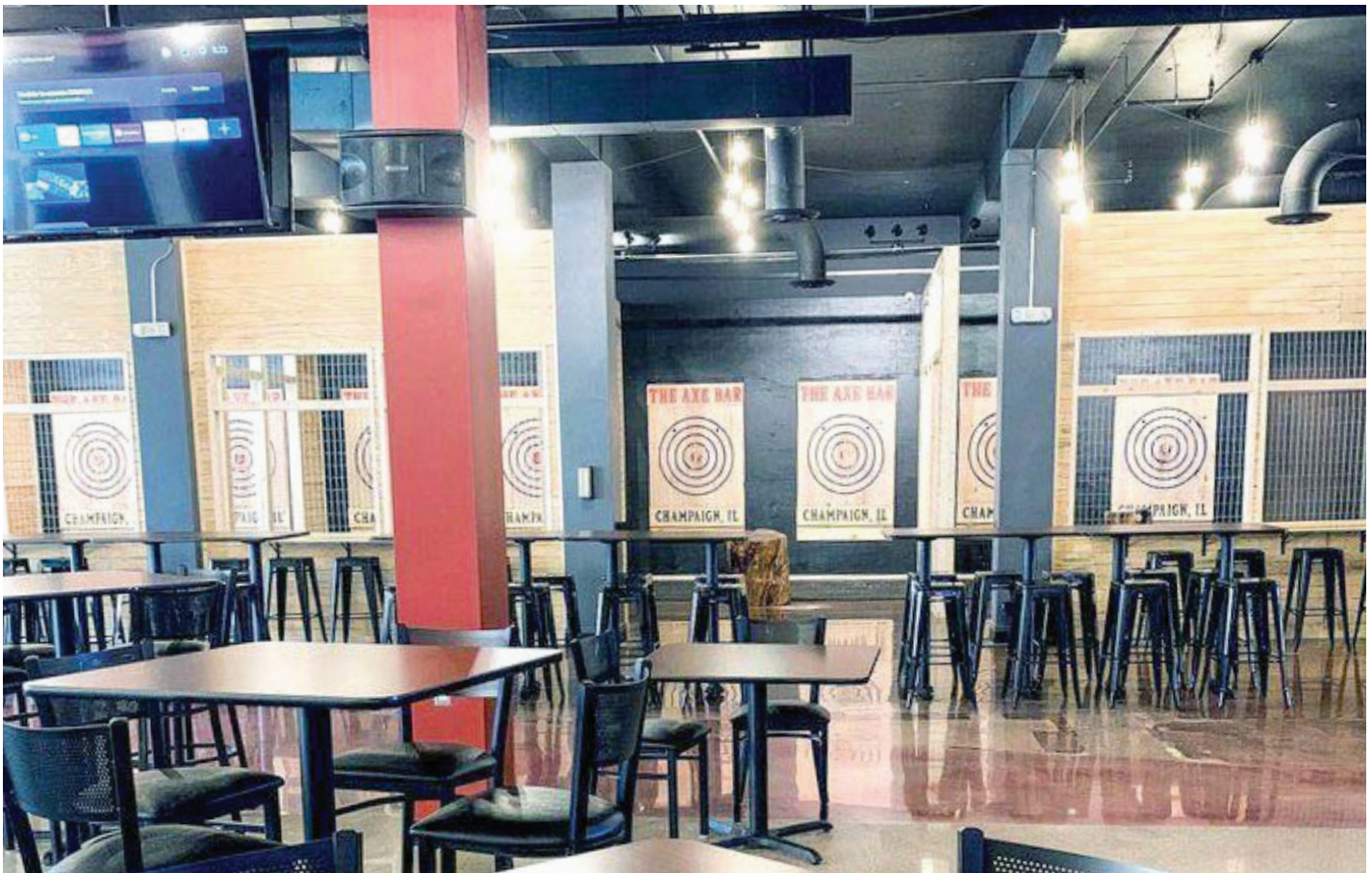
“We did everything we could to redesign the construction plans and saved two of the trees,” Tadlock said.

Over the years, Tadlock also has lent his construction expertise to a few Vermilion County McDonald’s projects, including building a new restaurant in 2010 in Hoopeston to replace the original one built in 1976, and renovating two Danville locations — one featuring a Classic Rock ‘n’ Roll theme and another with a Danville Celebrity theme.

Perhaps the most challenging project ECI has taken on in recent years was from Casey’s. In April 2024, it completed construction on one of the newest Casey’s in the region, located along Interstate 74 just east of Crawfordsville, Ind. ECI also was involved with building new Casey’s in Danville, Tilton and Hoopeston, as well as the remodeling and reconstruction of locations in Springfield and Shelbyville.

“They’ve grown into a \$16 billion company, and we’ve been there to help them achieve that growth,” Haunhorst said.





“Casey’s has a tight time frame for construction — it’s 18 weeks,” he said, adding the company “gave the Crawfordsville project to him (Tadlock) in the middle of winter.”

“It was quite a challenge,” Tadlock recalled. “We had to raise the ground by 3 feet, and we had to bring water and propane to the construction site.”

Another uniquely challenging project was the expansion and renovation of the downtown Champaign space now occupied by Pour Bros. Craft Taproom.

“The space had been a car dealership in the 1920s, and we saw all kinds of things during the project,” Haunhorst said. “There were protests over the native prairie grass that was growing where we wanted to expand.”

At one point during the project, the late environmental activist David Monk, well known in Champaign-Urbana as the “Prairie Monk,” jumped out in front of an excavator, Haunhorst said.



The lobby at the Webber & Thies law firm’s new home on the fourth floor of the Trade Center on Kirby Avenue in Champaign, where it moved after a long run at Urbana’s Lincoln Square Mall. ECI led the renovation effort.

Photos provided



Two of ECI Construction Services' marquee jobs in downtown Champaign included the remodel of the space that became the Axe Bar, left, and the expansion and renovation of the space that became Pour Bros. Craft Taproom, above.

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"The Champaign Park District came out and relocated the prairie grass," he said.

Environmental considerations and sustainability are a large part of a current ECI project, in partnership with the Urbana Park District, to improve the Busey Woods trail across from the Urbana Country Club.

"We are taking down some of the black locust trees, milling the wood and using it for bridges, pathways, railing and steps," Haunhorst said. "It is an overgrown area, and we are putting the wood to good use. There is not much of a price difference between buying the wood and milling your own."

ECI values its longstanding client relationships while continuing to build new ones.

"I treat them all the same way and do the best I can do with their project," Tadlock said about his clients.

One such longtime client, Longview Bank, has asked ECI to transform the former Ginger Ale's site at 405 S. Dunlap Ave. in Savoy into a banking location.

"TCT did a lot of work for Longview Bank 20 years ago," Tadlock said. "It makes you feel nice when they come back for a new project."

Haunhorst said the former Ginger Ale's will undergo "a significant change."

"Right now it's a big kitchen, but we will double it in size and add a brick-like exterior and windows and doors," he said.

When another longtime client, the Webber & Thies law firm, relocated in 2024 to the fourth floor of the Trade Center on Kirby Avenue in Champaign from its longtime home on the second floor of Lincoln Square Mall in Urbana, ECI oversaw

the interior remodel and expansion project.

"We ripped out half of the fourth floor and remodeled 9,000 square feet," Haunhorst said. "After we completed that, they came back to us and asked us to expand the project because they needed more space."

"We have a 20-some-year relationship with them and have worked on their families' homes as well," he said.

Other notable ECI projects include:

→ **Caitlin Hicks Design, Monticello:** Complete interior and exterior remodel of a former frozen yogurt shop.

→ **The Venue CU, Champaign:** Remodel of the interior of the historic buildings that were once home to The Highdive and Vriner's Confectionary.

→ **The Axe Bar, Champaign:** Interior remodeling.

→ **Horizon Climbing Gym, Champaign:** Interior remodeling.

→ **Bluestem Financial Advisors, Savoy:** Interior remodeling with double waterfall countertops and meeting rooms with custom wallpaper and special lighting.

Alongside their construction projects, ECI's team members are also building community partnerships by participating in Habitat for Humanity's annual Raise the Woof event, during which the ECI team builds a doghouse for auction; partnering with C-U at Home on residential remodeling projects in Urbana; and visiting local schools to introduce pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students to construction careers.

Project Manager Dan Hutton said the latter involvement began with an email sent about a year and a half ago by a student teacher at the University of Illinois who was

looking for a construction company to come talk to her second-graders during Construction Education Month.

"It was right before Halloween, so we went out and bought little hard hats and little vests we put our company sticker on," Hutton said. "They were building stuff out of cardboard, and we talked to them about what they needed to do to become a construction worker, such as they needed to be healthy and strong, they needed to know how to read blueprints, and we told them how important math is."

Since that first classroom visit, other area teachers have reached out to ECI to talk to their students about construction work.

ECI's involvement with Raise the Woof has grown to the point that it is now one of the sponsors of the annual competition that ends with the doghouses being auctioned off to raise money for Habitat for Humanity.

"We've built about four or five doghouses, so now we're considered some of the 'old dogs' in the competition," Hutton said.

Hutton's wife, Aerika, draws up the design for ECI's doghouse entry each year. Past doghouses have incorporated a planter bench and a sliding mini barn door.

"She comes up with the design and tells us to make it happen," Haunhorst said.

ECI also is involved in developing the next generation of construction workers by offering pre-apprenticeship classes in the firm's Urbana office for those interested in the skilled trades. The classes, which are in partnership with the Associated Builders and Contractors of Illinois, are part of a U.S. Department of Labor-approved apprenticeship program.



Among ECI Construction Services' recent projects: The Culver's on University Avenue in Urbana, above, which opened in 2019; and the former Ginger Ale's location on Dunlap Avenue in Savoy, below, which it is turning into a Longview Bank branch. Photos provided



“There are 400 students in the Chicago area enrolled in the program, but we host several classes here and continue to grow it Downstate,” Haunhorst said. “We’ve had some small successes here so far.

“They learn about the different skill sets they can get into, such as HVAC, electrical, plumbing, carpentry and heavy equipment,” he said.

Haunhorst said encouraging interest in the skilled trades is vital to the future of the construction workforce.

“For every four Baby Boomers retiring, there’s only one person to take their place,” he said. ✂



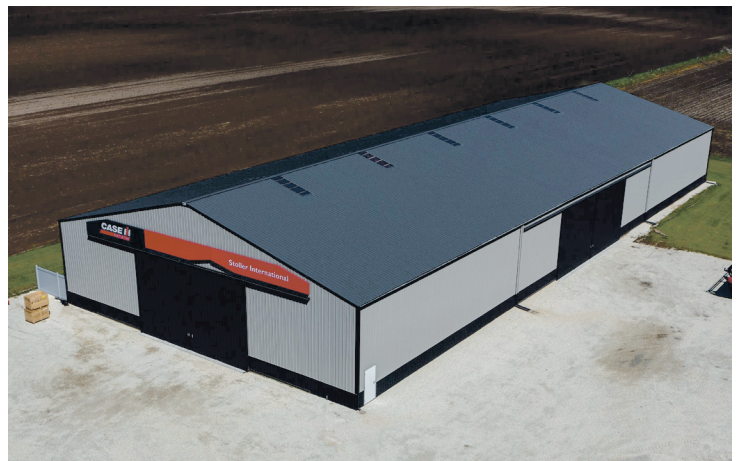
The ECI team with their creation for the Champaign County Habitat for Humanity’s 2024 Raise the Woof event. The dual-purpose bench and doghouse was auctioned off at the benefit, with proceeds going to the organization.

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root beer
stand along
Illinois 1
to reopen
year-round
under new
owners**



The Chrisman Frostop is shown in April, before the new owners completed renovations ahead of a June 5 reopening.

STORY and PHOTOS Jennifer Bailey

CHRISMAN

When you see the big root beer mug on Illinois 1, you know you're approaching a historic Americana drive-in restaurant.

New owners Chad David and fiancée Michelle Smith reopened the stand June 5. It's been a local landmark since the 1950s and had been owned by the Rigger family since around 1960.



The Frostop's new look just a few days before its June 5 reopening.

Photo provided

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The iconic mug sign greets travelers on Illinois 1.

Tiffany Tarter, a granddaughter of the original owners, said her grandparents passed it down to her dad and aunt, who typically kept the business open between mid-to-late March (depending on weather) to October.

“My dad for health reasons had to stop working, and for the same reason, my aunt decided that she could no longer work,” Tarter said. “We put it up for sale at the beginning of December hoping a local family might buy it and carry on the traditions.”

“Luckily, we sold the first day we had showings to a local family whose son used

to work for us.”

She said David and Smith plan to keep the Frostop name, but “they just won’t call it Riggen’s Frostop.”

“They have been busy making improvements and preparing for their opening,” Tarter said. “We are excited to see it reopen, to see what things stay the same and what changes as the Frostop starts its new chapter.”

The family ties for the business will continue. David said his son Hayden worked at the Frostop for the last five years, and two of Smith’s children, Layne and Lyndsi, also worked there, along with Layne’s fiancée, Kendl.



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The seasonal business closed in October, and David said he and his fiancée found out in December that the Riggen family was interested in selling.

“We’re just remodeling,” David said about next steps.

That includes a new roof, gutters, HVAC, flooring, cabinets, countertops and new fryers and equipment to be installed.

“We plan on staying open all year because now we have heat,” Smith said.

She said they plan on keeping the same menu of burgers and other items, and also plan to serve pizza, breadsticks, wings and other food.

Carhops will be seasonal.

David’s family is from the Chrisman area and Smith has lived there as well. They now live just outside of town, and Smith’s daughter goes to Chrisman High School.

David works for a power plant in Terre Haute, Ind. Smith just recently quit her job at North American Lighting at the corporate building in Paris, Ill., to run the Frostop.

They will have mostly family but also some high school students as staff.

The community is excited that the root beer stand will continue to be open.

“We’re getting a lot of positive

feedback,” David said, adding that when they’ve been working on the building, they get people stopping asking them what’s happening with the business.

David said they didn’t want to see it close.

He said he and his son had joked that if it ever came up for sale, they should buy it to give him and Smith something to do. And now it’s happened.

“We’re pretty excited about it,” David said. “We think it sounds pretty promising, with the people we’ve talked to and stuff. So, we’re hoping that it all works out.” ✂



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Summer activities for older adults



By JOAN DIXON
CIB contributor



Outdoor tai chi classes like this one in Champaign's West Side Park improve balance, coordination and stress management.

Summer offers longer days, warmer weather and many opportunities for older adults to stay active and connected. For some, however, social isolation is not just an issue during the winter months. It can also be a problem during the summer, when it seems like everyone else is enjoying the good weather and outdoors with family and friends.

For older adults, summer activities should focus on safety, social interaction and maintaining mobility. With proper planning and hydration, the season can become one of the most rewarding times of the year.

Transportation can be a barrier for some folks. While there are options with the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District, nonprofit organizations and churches, neighbors

who are heading out to the store or on errands should think about including an older adult from the area. It is an opportunity to connect and get them out of the house.

Remaining active during the summer months provides several important benefits for older adults:

- Improves cardiovascular health and circulation.
- Supports balance, flexibility and strength.
- Reduces feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- Enhances mood and mental clarity.
- Encourages better sleep patterns.
- Promotes independence and confidence.

Even light activity can make a meaningful difference in physical and emotional health.

Walking is one of the safest and most accessible forms of exercise for older adults. Joining a walking group at a local park or community center adds a social element while encouraging regular movement. Because of the cooler temperatures, morning or evening walks are ideal during summer.

Many formal and informal groups do yoga and tai chi outdoors. These gentle exercises improve balance, coordination and stress management.

Gardening combines light physical activity with relaxation and creativity. Planting flowers and herbs can provide a sense of accomplishment while improving flexibility and hand strength. Planting vegetables also is an opportunity to share the harvest with neighbors — especially when too many cucumbers appear.



Gardening is a great way to combine light physical activity with relaxation and creativity. Here, Clark Lindsey resident John Jordan talks about his garden in 2022 in the facility's community garden of raised and ground-level beds. Plots are also available to the general public in Meadowbrook Park, just to the south.

Raised garden beds and container gardens are especially helpful for individuals with limited mobility.

Social activities also encourage connection. These can include community events and festivals such as summer festivals, farmers markets, concerts in the parks and other area activities that give older adults opportunities to meet new people and stay engaged with their communities.

Check out the calendars of both the Champaign and Urbana park districts —champaignparks.org and urbanaparks.org — for events throughout the year, especially for older adults.

The Stevick Senior Center in the Family Service office at 405 S. State St. in Champaign has activities every day ranging from the daily men's coffee group to yoga, cards and crocheting. They also sponsor the monthly "Ethel and Maud Luncheon," which is held at CityView on the top floor of the Illinois Terminal in downtown Champaign, with live entertainment

and food prepared by Dish Passionate Catering.

Book Clubs also provide opportunities to read books and discuss them with others. The topics and groups run the gamut from nonfiction to fiction, from political to religious and everything in between. Talk to the very helpful staff at the local libraries who can help you find a book club that appeals to your interests. These groups typically meet throughout the year, too, so it is not only a summer activity.

Summer is the time to go on campus. Krannert Art Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, Spurlock Museum is Tuesday through Sunday and Krannert Center for the Performing Arts hosts "Krannert Uncorked" on several Summer Thursdays. In Mahomet, the Museum of the Grand Prairie is open daily from 1 to 5 p.m.

Volunteering is always a great opportunity to be engaged and productive, offering service to others. Champaign County alone has over 1,700 nonprofits addressing causes,

needs and interests for everyone. During the summer months, when the university students are not in town, many nonprofits have increased needs for volunteers. Contact the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois — cfeci.org — for help in finding one that interests you.

With all these activities, it is important to keep safe. As the temperatures rise, remember to stay hydrated, avoid extreme heat, wear protective clothing like a wide-brimmed hat and sunscreen, take frequent breaks and consult healthcare providers to discuss an exercise program especially for those with chronic medical conditions.

By staying active, social and mindful of safety, older adults can fully enjoy the energy and beauty of the summer season.

Joan Dixon is a member of the steering committees for Age-Friendly Champaign Urbana and Advocates for Aging Care and represents Champaign County on the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging.

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