



# THE CHAMBER COURIER

May 2021

The monthly business publication of the Canton Area

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## Why is it so Hard to Find Employees in 2021?

*By: Carla Bobell*

NOW HIRING! Do you see these signs everywhere? Well, it's not just here. According to an article by Frank J Kenny, employee shortage is everywhere! Why are employers struggling to find employees? Why are employees not showing up to work at all? The current pandemic we have all suffered through is now bringing in other issues that are hindering the business world.

According to the Labor Department the official unemployment rate, at the time of writing, is 6.3%. Not too high, right? Most people who want to work are working, which means there are more positions than interest according to Kenny. He further provides a possible list of reasons in his article why people are choosing not to work:

1. **COVID** –The pandemic has realigned thinking and priorities. People may now have health issues or are taking care of someone with health issues, or lack of child care.
2. **Fear** – Some people are still afraid to be around others and contracting the virus.
3. **Entrepreneurship** – People that were laid off are thinking about perusing their dream of opening their own business.
4. **End of Safety Net** – There were many layoffs last year for even those “safe” jobs. Suddenly jobs that were seen as “safety nets” no longer felt so safe.
5. **Using/abusing the System** – There are those who have figured out how to make the system work for them, at least for the time being. They are receiving federal funds, loans and other money that pays their expenses. In the short term, it may not make sense to go back to work, but in the long term this source will dry up and they will be forced to go back to work.

Another reality from this pandemic is hiring employees is very different now, and employers need to explore ways to make their business attractive to potential employees. Check out the article “How to Recruit Employees for Small Business” online at [www.thebalancesmb.com](http://www.thebalancesmb.com). If you are someone who is waiting to go back to work, you may want to go back now because your choices of better jobs is much greater now than it will be in the near future.



**Is your business interested in  
hosting a Business After Hours?**

We are now booking Business After Hours for 2022. If you'd like to reserve a month, please contact us at:

**cantonareachamber@gmail.com**

or

**(309) 647-2677 ext. 4**

## ***It's Back!***

We are excited to announce the  
2021 Annual Chamber Cruise-In  
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## MEMBER ON THE MOVE: WHITNEY PARRISH

Barnhart, Tinsman & Associates, Ltd. is pleased to welcome the addition of Whitney R. Parrish as an associate attorney. Whitney is a lifelong resident of Fulton County, graduating from Lewistown Community High School in 2010. Whitney graduated from Spoon River College in 2011 and earned her degree in History from Bradley University in 2013.

Whitney received her Juris Doctorate Degree from Northern Illinois School of Law in 2016, where she earned the distinction of graduating summa cum laude. During law school, Whitney competed in various internal and external competitions. Whitney was a semi-finalist in the mock trial competition, a quarter-finalist in the moot court competition, and was chosen to receive an award as the best orator in the closing argument competition. Whitney also completed an internship with the Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic and worked closely with her law school professors as a research assistant.



Whitney was admitted to practice law in Illinois in 2016, and practices primarily in the area of family law (including divorce, custody, support, property division, maintenance, adoption, and juvenile matters) throughout the Ninth Judicial Circuit of Illinois. Whitney maintains the necessary certifications to serve as a Guardian Ad Litem for children in the Ninth Judicial Circuit. Whitney also practices in the areas of estate planning, criminal defense, and civil litigation.

Whitney can be reached at (309) 647-0100 or [whitney@barnhartlaw.net](mailto:whitney@barnhartlaw.net).

## WELCOME NEW MEMBER: KC SALES

[www.kctiresales.com](http://www.kctiresales.com) | 630 E. Linn Street, Canton | (309) 647-8040

### K C Sales



KC Sales Inc, in Canton, IL, is the leading tire dealer serving Fulton, Peoria and Knox counties and the surrounding areas since 1992. They reach up to a 100-mile radius, including Cuba, Farmington, and Lewiston. Their specialties include tire sales, repair, retreading and vulcanizing. KC Sales carries commercial, agricultural, and industrial tires. They also have same-day service and one day turnaround service.

If you have farm equipment or semi trucks that need tire repairs or retreading, be sure to check out KC Sales. They carry brands such as Bridgestone, Firestone, Goodyear, Michelin, and more!

209 East Chestnut Street | Canton, IL 61520 | (309) 647-2677

## WELCOME NEW MEMBER: HULVEY LAW

Hulvey Law is proud to be opening a second location in Canton, Illinois. Hulvey Law was founded in 2017 by attorney Michael Hulvey. Michael is a native of Canton, graduating from Canton High school in 2001. He earned his degree in Business Administration from the University of Illinois Springfield, in 2009. Michael initially worked in the corporate setting as a sales manager prior to pursuing higher education. In 2013, he began his journey through Northern Illinois University College of Law. During his tenure at Northern Illinois University, Michael completed a judicial externship, an externship with the Illinois Innocence Project, and internships with two local personal injury and workers' compensation law firms. Following graduation and acceptance to the Illinois Bar, Michael has worked exclusively in practice areas of plaintiffs' personal injury and workers' compensation.



Michael currently resides in Canton where he lives with his wife Layne and their two children. He is eager to serve his hometown community and is committed to stepping up for the underserved. Michael understands the difficulties and complex issues linked to workers' compensation, personal injury, wrongful death lawsuits, and motor vehicle accidents.

The new office will be located at 121 West Elm Street. Contact him at (309) 643-1655 for a free assessment of your case or visit [HulveyLaw.com](http://HulveyLaw.com) for further information.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBER: SERENITY POINT HOSPICE

Serenity Point Hospice is proud to bring over 50 years of highly diverse experiences in home health, hospice, internal medicine, pediatric medicine, and emergency medicine to the Canton community. Serenity Point Hospice is dedicated to providing individualized hospice care with services specially tailored to the physical, social, psychological and spiritual needs of patients with life-limiting illness, their families and the community, by delivering high quality and compassionate care.



At Serenity Point Hospice, the staff strive to provide excellent care for individuals of all ages and in all stages of life. Their goal is to help you maintain the highest quality of life in the comfort of your own home. Serenity Point Hospice understands the importance of family and they do their best to treat your family like their own. They are there to support, listen, and respond to your care with compassion and understanding. Serenity Point Hospice feels blessed to have this opportunity to give back to Canton and the surrounding community.

[www.serenitypointhospice.care](http://www.serenitypointhospice.care)

507 N. Main, Canton

(309) 435-7050

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBER: CULLIGAN WATER OF SPRINGFIELD



The U.S. Water Culligan Group was formed in 1988, when its founder, Randy Easton, acquired the first group of dealerships that would make up the original company. The company grew steadily throughout the 1990's, but it was in the first two decades of the 2000's that the group underwent rapid expansion, finding itself where it stands today. The U.S. Water Culligan Group (USWCG) now owns and operates 21 Culligan franchises, covering Nevada, Illinois, Virginia, Maryland and Washington D.C. Culligan employs 175 people, providing superior local expertise in technical service, customer service and sales. The USWCG is a family owned business, with two generations of Easton's currently working in the organization. Randy Easton, the company's founder, acts as President, his son, R.J. Easton, joined the business in 2012 and currently oversees the company's business development efforts. Additionally, Randy's daughter, Dottie, joined the business in 2015 as its Controller.

The U.S. Water Culligan Group is your go-to water treatment company. They have been serving the Central Illinois region for over 65 years, and are proud to provide exceptional water treatment products and services to Springfield, Decatur, Chatham, and the surrounding area. Culligan has had stores in the area since the 1950s and the Decatur and Rushville locations were purchased by the U.S. Water Culligan Group in 2006 and 2007 respectively. Their Rushville, IL location was moved to Springfield in 2015.

Culligan Water's areas of expertise include water treatment, water purification systems and services, repairs and installations, problem water testing with an EPA Certified lab, and water delivery. Their Springfield dealership serves several communities in Central Illinois including Canton, Farmington, Cuba, and Fairview. As a local business, U.S. Water Culligan Group recognizes the importance of community and the impact businesses can have on individuals and organizations. Therefore, USWCG is proud to be sponsors of many area non-profit groups around Central Illinois.

### **Culligan Water of Springfield**

4330 Wabash Avenue  
Springfield, IL 62711

(217) 527-1000

M-F: 8:00am - 5:00pm  
Sat - Sun: Closed

[www.uswatercompany.com](http://www.uswatercompany.com)



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4 Person Scramble  
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**CANTON AREA CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE**

Questions: Carla Bobell  
(309) 647-2677 ext. 3  
cbobell@cantonillinois.org

**How to Register a Team**

To register a four-person team, visit our website’s “Chamber Events & Programs” Page and click on the Golf Outing. There you will find a place to register a team. Or you can email us with the following information:

- Business Name
- Team Name
- Primary Contact Person (with phone and email)
- First and Last Names of Team Players

All teams are \$300, and your reservation is not complete until payment is received. If you’re a Chamber Member, you can pay online at [www.cantonillinois.org/login](http://www.cantonillinois.org/login). Otherwise, make checks payable to the **Canton Area Chamber of Commerce**. We have a limited number of spots for teams, so sign up now!

[cantonareachamber@gmail.com](mailto:cantonareachamber@gmail.com)  
(309) 647-2677 ext. 4

**Sponsorship Opportunities**

There are three levels of sponsorship opportunities for the Annual Chamber Golf Outing:

- **Tee Sponsor (\$150)** - Includes logo on signage at the event, listed in the Chamber Courier and on the Chamber website.
- **Cart Sponsor (\$500)** - Includes logo on all carts at the event, business giveaways in carts, listed in the Chamber Courier and on the Chamber website. Includes 2 golfers’ team fees, cart, and lunch.
- **Major Sponsor (\$1,000)** - Includes a verbal mention at the event, logo prominent on signage at the event, logo in promotional marketing leading up to the event, listed in Chamber Courier and on the Chamber website. Includes a full golf team’s fees, two carts, and lunch.

If you would like to be a sponsor, or if your business would like to donate a prize, please contact us with the information listed to the left.

# HERE AT HOME #2: MITCHELL COONRADT

## PASSION PLAYS by Carol Davis

Fortunately for Canton, MidAmerica National Bank's Commercial and Agriculture Loan Officer Mitchell Coonradt brought his passions home after college. Recent research studies focus on the experiences and life/work choices of rural high school graduates. A 2019 article by Ingrid A. Nelson explores how sense of place influences college graduates to return to their small rural towns after college. The lure of a rural lifestyle, proximity to family, and professional career opportunities must blend with career aspirations to entice young professionals to return, Nelson writes. As we will see, in this second article in the Canton Area Chamber of Commerce Here at Home Series, these factors, plus an unexpected family loss, brought Mitch home to stay.

Mitch was born in Canton. His dad Terry moved to Canton in the early 1980s and purchased a veterinary practice. His mother, Stephanie, grew up in Lewistown and during Mitch's adolescence managed the day-to-day operations of the clinic. "Growing up I always had an interest in my dad's business," Mitch says. "Yes, I liked the animals, but I was more drawn to the administrative side of things."

After graduating from Canton High School in 2006, Mitch headed to Illinois State University (ISU) seeking a degree in Finance. In high school, he discovered he most enjoyed his history, business, and economics classes. Finance seemed like the perfect career for him, but the economic downturn during his first two years of college didn't project a high employment rate for financial advisors at the time. However, following a stint as an assistant coach for a 7th grade girls basketball team at Chiddix Junior High in Normal, Mitch felt another call and switched his major to history education intending to teach and coach. Assisting others in achieving their dreams became Mitch's fulltime passion.

The seeds of that passion were planted early. "Several high school teachers helped steer my path," Mitch says. "As a basketball coach, Mike Sorrell taught me to focus on discipline and the importance of paying attention to detail. He had an acronym I've never forgotten. MTXE. Mental Toughness Extra Effort."

Sorrell was also the sponsor of the CHS Key Club, a high school community service arm associated with Kiwanis International. Its vision states that Kiwanis will be a positive influence in communities worldwide — so that one day, all children will wake up in communities that believe in them, nurture them and provide the support they need to thrive.

Sports and coaches increased Mitch's belief in the importance of positive leadership skills. As a three-sport kid, Mitch played football, basketball, and baseball. Each of his coaches added key life skills to Mitch's personal philosophy. "Coach Bill Lingle taught me that when you get hit, you get up," Mitch says. "Baseball coaches Mike Emery and Brent Wheeler gave me straight talk and expected me to do my best. All the time. Football Coach Chuck Wright used a two-fold 'Eye-in-the-sky doesn't lie' line I've never forgotten. He taught me to do my best even when no one was looking, because that Eye Up in the Sky always was."



*Continued on pg. 8*



## Passion Plays Continued

### THE NEXT PHASE

After graduating from ISU in May of 2010, District 150 hired Mitch to teach history and economics at Manual Academy enabling Mitch to return to live in Canton and commute to Peoria. Not surprisingly, Mitch also coached boys and girls cross country teams and football and scouted for the boys basketball program. Never one to sit still for long, Mitch earned his M.S. in Educational Leadership from American College of Education while teaching and married his Canton High School sweetheart, Kayla Haynes Coonradt, a surgical nurse with Graham Hospital and Graham Medical, in December of 2012.

Mitch's teaching and coaching at Manual Academy strengthened his resolve to help others. "Teaching at Manual opened my eyes to the struggles many students and families face just trying to make it through one single day," says Mitch. "I quickly realized that the students wanted to do well but that life kept getting in the way. I felt compelled to help them realize their dreams, whether in life, in school, or in their career choices. It was a very rewarding experience."

However, the unexpected death of his father, Dr. Terry Coonradt, in March of 2013, was a personal and professional turning point for Mitch. "With my dad gone, I was thrust into a situation where I had to figure out how to keep the veterinary clinic's doors open, retain employees and clients, and generate revenue, all while the sole revenue generator was now gone," Mitch says reflectively. All of a sudden, the young man who believed in helping others needed help himself. "So many people stepped up to help. Pat Carter, Pam Lingle, and doctors David Hahn, Sarah Phipps, Kyle and Amanda Flessner, and Kevin Stephenson from MidAmerica National Bank."

Meeting with Kevin Stephenson and working through the myriad of issues associated with the veterinary clinic re-ignited Mitch's interest in the business and financial world. He considered a career change where he could use his skills and assist people outside the field of education. He recalled his original interest in finance. A representative from MidAmerica National Bank mentioned a position opening to Mitch's high school friend Stephen Clark, a 2007 Canton High School graduate and now producer at Town and Country Insurance Agency in Canton. Stephen passed the information along to Mitch. Zach Krulac, a CHS graduate and now also employed by MANB offered up Mitch's name as well. Soon after, in 2014, Mitch received a call from MANB's Tom Claudon. It wasn't long before Mitch became a member of the MidAmerica National Bank family.

But Mitch never lost his passion for education. Currently, Mitch serves as President of the Spoon River College Foundation Board. "When asked to take a position on the SRC Foundation Board, I quickly said yes," Mitch says. "The college is a great asset for our community, and I truly believe that education is the key to everything in life. I could offer my business and finance knowledge and my passion for education to this one organization. My time on the Board has been very near and dear to me."



Colin Davis, the SRC Foundation Director and a baseball teammate of Mitch's throughout high school said this about him. "Mitch and I were teammates in high school and friends well before that, but the most impressive leadership quality I've always seen and admired in Mitch is his willingness to get in and do the dirty work that it takes to succeed. On the baseball field, he was a gritty player who wasn't afraid to get dirty, lay down a sacrifice bunt, hit the ball the other way, or whatever it took for the team to get a win. Today, those same qualities shine through. He leads by example and has seen the SRC Foundation through a period of significant growth where we accomplished so many things to put our organization and students at SRC in a better place for many years to come."

*Continued on pg. 9*



## Passion Plays Continued

Davis continues, “Fifteen years ago, when I threw a pitch and saw it come off the bat in Mitch’s direction was always a relief. Today, knowing that an important project is in his hands brings that same sense of relief, because I know it will get done and be done well.”

### THE FUTURE IS A FAMILY AFFAIR

Mitch and Kayla expanded the Coonradt family with the births of daughter Madison, 5, and son Knox, who will be 2 in May. “Canton has so much to offer,” Mitch says. “This community provided me with a positive foundation that I cherish and offers challenging opportunities and wonderful relationships to explore. I hope and believe that Canton will provide that for my own family.”

So perhaps the Nelson article is correct about a rural lifestyle, proximity to family, and professional career opportunities blending to entice young professionals to return to their rural roots. And it appears that those roots spread and sprout branches. Mitch’s brother Spencer and family live in Canton, too. And just recently their mother, Stephanie, returned to Canton after several years away to be near her sons and grandchildren and now works at Graham Home Medical and Equipment on South Main Street.

Ten years from now Mitch plans to still be living and working in Canton at MidAmerica National Bank. Rick Klinedinst, President and CEO of MidAmerica National Bank has this to say about Mitch. “Mitch has the ability to draw you in and will make you feel like you have known him all your life. He immediately gives you respect and treats you as the most important person in the world. He shows empathy and quickly understands the big picture of his job and how it effects the bank. Mitch has many great leadership qualities but the most special one is that people are willing to follow him.”

Sometime during the third quarter of 2021, Mitch will be transferring to MANB’s Wealth Management Group where he will assist people in realizing their financial goals. “Helping people has always been my focus,” says Mitch. “I feel very fortunate. Not everyone gets to combine their passions in life and call that a job.”

## A MESSAGE FROM COLE MCDANIEL

### Executive Director of the Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development

As more vaccines are being administered throughout our community, and the weather is getting nicer, it is time to start preparing for the “new normal”. We will get back in the full swing of things, and businesses are fully open again, let’s do our best to continue supporting our local businesses!

My encouragement to you for this year is to get involved in the downtown revitalization movement. Whether it’s buying a building, doing a renovation or volunteering your time to help with one of the many exciting projects we have going on in Canton, I encourage you to be a part of the exciting movement! If you have questions about how you can get more involved please reach out to me at [cmcdaniel@cantonillinois.org](mailto:cmcdaniel@cantonillinois.org).

As our downtown buildings start to fill up, and business is booming in the near future, don’t forget about all the exciting events that are just around the corner too! Such as Art on Main, Canton Cruise-In, Paddlepalooza, and many more!

2021 is going to be the year that helps define what the future of many communities will look like. Let’s all do our part in 2021 to be resilient and support our local businesses, and recover as a community!



# MESSAGE FROM ROLF SIVERTSEN

## Superintendent for CUSD #66

### Good Things Are Coming to Canton CUSD #66

Last year, Congress set aside approximately \$13.2 billion of the \$30.75 billion allotted to the Education Stabilization Fund through the CARES Act for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund). The Department will award these grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) for the purpose of providing local educational agencies with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the Nation. How will Canton benefit from those funds?

One component of the ESSER program includes the ability for schools to use the funds for capital improvements related to COVID. For example, one approved improvement involves the HVAC system at Lincoln. For the past two winters the HVAC system at Lincoln School has been a challenge. It is a 25-year-old system that utilizes univents that were installed when the building was initially constructed. Last winter hot water pipes froze and burst the univent radiators thus causing a leak in classrooms during the instructional day. The problem accelerated and became so bad it seemed like the system was under repair 2 times a week. In fact, at one point the district had to purchase two reserve univent radiators to ensure that the classrooms would have heat and be habitable if a univent radiator was under repair. Equally important, the windows have also been a problem.

The windows in Lincoln are the original single pane windows when the school was initially constructed in the early 1960's. The glazing is deteriorating and they leak intensely and need to be replaced. In fact, the windows are so leaky you can literally feel cold air intruding into the building during inclement weather. The weather intrusion makes the building uncomfortable and expensive to maintain. With the ESSER funding the district will be able to replace the HVAC system and install new windows. After those two projects are completed Lincoln School shouldn't need maintenance for quite some time. For example, both of the aforementioned repairs come after the installation of a new roof two years ago, the recent removal of all Asbestos floor tile, and the painting of most interior walls. When the HVAC and window projects have been completed, Lincoln should be ready for years to come. The following are other projects being considered:

- Window replacement at Ingersoll Middle School – the current windows are original
- Remodeling of Science Labs at Canton High School and Ingersoll Middle School – all of the proposed labs have never been remodeled.
- New band addition and all purpose room at Canton High School.
- Remodeling of Consumer and Family Science room at Canton High School.
- Removal of remaining Asbestos floor tile in Ingersoll Middle School.
- Repair/replacement of Westview and Eastview school windows – some currently leak.

Finally, in closing, additional funding for schools has also been proposed by President Biden as a nearly two trillion-dollar stimulus package. Reportedly, the funding for Illinois will be somewhere within the seven billion-dollar price range. To put this figure into perspective, the entire state education budget this year is 7.7 billion. The Biden stimulus proposal will create many opportunities for school districts throughout the state – including Canton.



# Chamber Exclusive Series

Amazing resources at minimal cost.  
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Tools for Success

## Navigating the New Normal

A Five-Part Webinar Series to Receive Helpful & Practical Tools to Navigate the New Normal



Wednesday, May 19, 2021

9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Ryan Weckerly

*Morningstar Media Group*

Marketing is more than just surface level, it's data and creating a strategy that reflects your business in order to reach your intended audience. When done right, marketing can translate to a stronger brand as well as more profit for your business. Ryan Weckerly will discuss how the right technology tools, combined with human interaction to develop more powerful leads, profitable sale, and long-term relationships for your brand.

Attendees will learn how these takeaways will help you effectively market your business:

- Dynamic web content
- Strong SEO
- Lead scoring and nurturing
- Lead destination tracking
- A vital SRM
- Behavioral based automated e-mails
- Performance analytics

★ Webinars \$15 each

Register via the Chamber Website under our **Calendar of Events**

[www.cantonillinois.chambermaster.com/events/calendar](http://www.cantonillinois.chambermaster.com/events/calendar)

Thanks to our sponsor:





# 150% CLUB

The 150% Club is an optional membership upgrade that provides added exposure for your business. By paying an additional 50% of regular membership dues at the time of your renewal or new membership, your business can join the Canton Area Chamber of Commerce's 150% Club.

Meet our

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