



THE CHAMBER COURIER

September 2021

The monthly business publication of the Canton Area

Your Chamber Ambassadors are here for your business. Contact them anytime.

Emylee Bitner, Bank of Farmington
Samantha Braden, Rhoades Real Estate
Bobby Brown, Flat Branch Home Loans
Rachel Bundy, Graham Health System
Joe Christian, MidAmerica National Bank
Stephen Clark, Town and Country Insurance
Jason Coulter, Big Cat's Bowls
Kiley Davis-Crouse, Davis Buick GMC
Sherri Delost, Jim Maloof Realtor
Angela Drach, Mid Century Fiber
Sandy Edsall, Davis Ford
Kim Fischer, Canton Harvester Inn
Jace Fletcher, Shelter Insurance
Jeromie Hale, Bistro 101
Seth Klinedinst, Crawford's Home Furnishings
John Lemon - Rise Canton
Dave Lewis, Dave Lewis Studio, Ltd.
Taryn Mellert, Spoon River Electric
JJ Montgomery - Mel's Sporting Goods
Amanda Reed, MidAmerica National Bank
Chase Shawgo, Ipava State Bank
Codi Swibold, Hy-Vee Food Stores
Eve Zimmerman, Spoon River College



We've Got Your Back in Business

by: Carla Bobell

As you will see in this issue of the Canton Chamber Courier, there is a lot of information about the Back 2 Business Grant program that is designed to help small businesses recover financially and the one day Hiring Extravaganza which is designed to help businesses gain employees and get our community back to work. Two years ago, we would not have been doing any of these programs or events, but this is only a part of what the pandemic has changed.

If you are a business owner or manager, you probably had to step up your game when it came to your online presence or even taking orders online and figuring out all the details that went into that change. Okay, I will stop with all the changes that happened, because we do not need to go back to those dark days.

However, even though things have changed for businesses in a big way, there is one thing that has not changed. The local Chambers are still here for all businesses. We are still here providing information and resources, providing connections, providing advocacy when you need your voice heard, educating when things get complicated and we continued to promote shopping small and shopping local. We still make businesses a priority. That will never change!

We value our businesses within our communities and we hope the businesses continue valuing the Canton Area Chamber of Commerce. We have been here for 96 years serving our business community and we plan to continue to carry that torch into the future, no matter what comes our way.

If you currently are not a Canton Chamber member, we would love to have your business/organization join our team today. Contact the Chamber office for more information.



Thursday, September 16
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Canton, IL 61520

Join us for food, doorprizes, and fun

Question:

How does a business get involved with the Chamber?

Answer:

It's easy. Either call the Chamber office at 647-2677 Ext 2, email the Chamber director at cbobell@cantonillinois.org or send a message on the Chamber Facebook page at CACC61520.

The Canton Area Chamber is here to help you and your business stay connected to the business community and help promote, advocate and educate.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President - Jana Emmons, Ipava State Bank
Vice President - Lacey Neal, Rock Valley Physical Therapy
Treasurer - Jodi Wilcoxon, MidAmerica National Bank
Secretary - Lisa Gardner, Jim Maloof Realtor

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Business and Community Development
Jodi Wilcoxon, MidAmerica National Bank

Government Affairs
Jay Valencia, Canton High School

Diane Bell, Di's Boutique
Jason Elwell, Peculiar Projects
Greg Glomb, Edward Jones
Jason Gumbart, Apex Seed Company
Larrilyn Hall, Wee-Ma-Tuk Hills Country Club
Becky McLeod, Graham Health System
Chad Murphy, Spoon River College
Whitney Parrish, Barnhart, Tinsman & Associates

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Jon Johnson, Canton Park District
Mayor Kent McDowell, City of Canton
Superintendent Tad Derenzy, CUSD #66
President Curt Oldfield, Spoon River College

STAFF

Executive Director - Carla Bobell
Assistant Director - Alli Ramsay

48 N. Main Street, Canton, IL 61520
(309) 647-2677
cantonareachamber@gmail.com

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Cook Medical is hiring over 100 manufacturing employees and five professional positions at the facility in Canton, Illinois

The expanded manufacturing capabilities will help Cook meet patient and customer needs for medical devices. In addition to providing jobs for the local economy where employees can receive pay starting at \$15/hour for lifesaving work, the extra positions will also support growth for the future of the company.

Cook Medical was named one of America's best places to work by Forbes for both 2018 and 2019. They were also named one of America's best places to work for women in 2019. In addition to \$15/hour pay, Cook offers a highly competitive benefit package to employees, including:



- *Excellent health, dental, hearing and vision insurance

- *401(k) employer match

- *Free education with My Cook Pathway education assistance program, from a high school diploma through a master's degree

- *Opportunities for paid professional development

- *Shift options and increased pay differentials

- *A sense of purpose in knowing that the work improves patient lives

No need to have a high school diploma to apply—we will help you get one! We can help you get a high school equivalency diploma (GED) for free. You can apply to positions without a diploma.

“Cook is thrilled to hire more employees in the Canton facility. We are upholding Bill Cook’s vision for giving back to the community he grew up in,” said Denise Kirgan, general manager of the Canton facility. Canton was home to Cook’s founder, Bill Cook. Cook Medical’s decision to expand its operations in Canton has proven beneficial to the company and to the community. Since establishing operations in 2010, the area has grown and developed with a \$40 million clinic, new retail stores, and new housing units. These amazing advancements are made possible by support from the spirited community and other local businesses. Cook Medical looks forward to investing more in the Canton area as we scale for future patient, customer, and employee needs.

Find out more and apply to open positions, go to americas-cookmedical.icims.com/jobs.

About Cook Medical -

Since 1963, Cook Medical has worked closely with physicians to develop technologies that eliminate the need for open surgery. Today we invent, manufacture and deliver a unique portfolio of medical devices to the healthcare systems of the world. Serving patients is a privilege, and we demand the highest standards of quality, ethics and service. We have remained family owned so that we have the freedom to focus on what we care about: patients, our employees and our communities.

Find out more at CookMedical.com and for the latest news; follow on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

COOK[®] MEDICAL

ONE DAY HIRING EXTRAVAGANZA

SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

SPONSORED BY THE CANTON CHAMBER



LOOKING FOR A JOB?
THEN GET READY FOR THE CANTON AREA

HIRING EXTRAVAGANZA

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

One Day Hiring Event!

**Jobs for all skills & all levels of experience. If you see
purple balloons outside of their business...
THEY'RE HIRING!!!!**

For a full list of participating employers visit CantonIllinois.org/Chamber
LOOK FOR THE PURPLE BALLOON!

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS

If you are a business who is in need of more employees, plan to participate in the one day Hiring Extravaganza hosted by the Canton Area Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday, September 8th. Times vary, meaning whatever your hours are the day of the event is when you would take applications that day.

If you plan to participate, your business would receive 3 purple balloons to be placed outside of your business on September 8th to notify anyone interested in applying for a job at your establishment can come in and fill out an application. Have a location set up inside to make it easy to see where applications are located.

Your business would then be listed on the Canton Chamber website at www.cantonillinois.org. If your business has an online application, we will share that link.

There is no cost to participate in this one day event and you do not need to be a Chamber member.

For more information contact the Canton Chamber office at 647-2677 Ext. 2 or send an email to cbobell@cantonillinois.org.

LOOKING FOR A NEW CAREER?

The Canton Area Chamber of Commerce one day Hiring Extravaganza will take place Wednesday, September 8, 2021. Employers around the city will place Purple Balloons outside of their businesses to show they are hiring!

Walk in and drop off a resume at participating businesses, possibly chat with an employer and/or apply online! You can see a list of participating businesses, locations and directions to apply at www.cantonillinois.org/hiring-extravaganza.

Don't wait. Start your new career now!

NOW HIRING

www.facebook.com/CACC61520

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF CUSD #66

The start of the new school year is always a busy time of the year. All of the Canton Union School District #66 schools started the 2021-2022 school year off with open houses. Our elementary schools conducted their open houses the week prior to the start of school to give the younger students the opportunity to tour the school, visit their classrooms and meet their principals, teachers and staff members prior to the first day of school. Our middle school students were given the opportunity to visit the school prior to the start of school to set up their lockers, practice their new locker combinations, and find their classrooms. Both the high school and middle school hosted their meet and greet open houses the first week of school.

With the start of school, we also have the start of school sports at both the middle school and high school level. Our student athletes and our coaches are very excited to be able to participate and compete this year.



Tad DeRenz
Superintendent

The first day of school for students took place on August 16th and went very well throughout the district. Our staff members and administrators were happy to have students back in the buildings and look forward to a successful year of learning.

We would like to thank the City of Canton Police Department for their support in welcoming back the students of Canton Union School District 66 for another year of learning by having a City of Canton Police Officer present at each of our school buildings on the first day back.

Lastly, we would also like to thank the community for their ongoing continued support while we try to navigate through another year of learning that is bound to throw us some challenges along the way.

GO LITTLE GIANTS!



CANTON

UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT #66

CONNECT • CREATE • COLLABORATE

BACK 2 BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM

A Message from Cole McDaniel

Executive Director for the Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development

Back 2 Business (B2B) Grant Program

The State of Illinois announced its Back 2 Business (B2B) Grant Program designed to help small businesses who suffered revenue losses between 2019 and 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of \$250 million in grants are available, ranging from \$5,000 to \$150,000. The eligibility for the program is very broad and most businesses with \$20 million or less in annual revenue are qualified. The program also has set aside and prioritizes certain hard hit business types like restaurants and hotels, smaller businesses (under \$5 million in revenue), businesses in low-income census tracts, and businesses who were not helped by other programs like Paycheck Protection Program and Business Interruption Grant.

The state's application portal opened to accept submissions starting on Wednesday, August 18. The last day for B2B applications will be October 11.

The Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development (SRPED) is here to help all of our businesses in Canton and Fulton County. Cole McDaniel, Executive Director for SRPED, is the local Community Navigator for the B2B Grant Program. He encourages business owners to take a look at the required documentation, pull these items together, and then contact Cole for assistance, if needed.

Cole McDaniel: (309) 647-2677 Ext:4, cmcdaniel@cantonillinois.org



Cole McDaniel

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white shirt and a dark apron, is sitting at a desk in what appears to be a restaurant or bar, smiling at the camera. A laptop is open in front of her. The background is slightly blurred, showing shelves with bottles.

Still Recovering from the Pandemic?

**New \$250M Grant Program
for Hardest Hit Industries**

 **Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**
JB Pritzker, Governor

 **BACK 2
BUSINESS**
SMALL BUSINESS RECOVERY GRANTS



FUN COMMUNITY EVENTS IN CANTON



The World Famous
Budweiser Clydesdales
will Parade in
Downtown Canton
September 9th, 2021
at 5:30 pm



CANTON FRIENDSHIP FESTIVAL

- • • • •
- Wednesday, September 15, 16, 17 and 18 •
- Fairgrounds out by Linn Lanes in Canton •
- Parade on Saturday, September 18th at 10:00 am •
- • • • •





*of
Canton*

NEW location -Downtown Canton

12:00 - 3:00 PM

This Community Event
brought to you by



Sunday
September 26, 2021

Food tastings and beverages will
require the purchase of tokens - \$1

The Taste of Canton will offer a variety of food tastings from
local eateries, beer and wine area, and feature live entertainment

CO HOST OF THE TASTE OF CANTON



HyVee

TBK BANK

Live Entertainment
Local Band

12:00 - 3:00 Monster lane



Kid's Activity Area

FREE

Games & Crafts
Inflatables



Beer & Wine Garden

White Oak's Sports Bar

Domestic Beers - Microbrews

Wine - Wine Coolers



Awards given:

Best of Show, Best Appetizer, Best Entrée and Best Dessert

Pie Eating Contest!

Sponsored by
Princess Creations...

Sign up to participate in the pie eating contest!
Competition age groups are Elementary School, Junior
High/High School and Adults. Only 12 openings for
each group! Sign up the day of the event.



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

2021 MEMBERS

Advanced Rehab & Sports Medicine
 American Family Insurance
 American Legion Post #16
 APEX Seed Company
 Art Hossler Auto Plaza
 Associates in Dentistry
 Bank of Farmington
 Barnhart, Tinsman & Associates, Ltd.
 Big Brothers Big Sisters
 Camille's of Canton
 Canton Elks Lodge
 Canton Family YMCA
 CEFCU Canton Member Center
 Central Illinois Lighting & Signs, Inc.
 CFC Properties
 Comcast Business
 COOK Medical
 Crawford's Home Furnishing
 Dana Smith
 Dempster Insurance Agency
 Di's Boutique
 Digital Copy Systems
 Eagle Point Solar
 First Christian Church
 Froehling, Weber & Schell, LLP
 Fulton County Emergency Medical Assoc.
 Fulton County Housing Authority
 Fulton County Septic
 Giant Goose Ranch
 G-M Mechanical of Canton, Inc.
 Harold Jump
 Helping Hands Resale Shoppe
 Hocker, Fitzjarrald & Richardson, PC CPAs
 Houlthaus Companies, Inc.
 Hulvey Law
 Hy-Vee of Canton
 Ipava State Bank
 Jimmy Johns - Subwars, LLC

- John Clark
- John McCarthy - Attorney at Law
- Johnson & Johnson, P.C.
- Jones Surveying & Engineering Corp
- Kevin & Debbie Stephenson
- Kevin Meade
- Kiwanis Club of Canton
- Maurer-Stutz, Inc.
- McDonald's of Canton
- Mel's Sporting Goods
- MidAmerica National Bank
- Mid Century Fiber
- Monical's Pizza
- North Central Behavioral Health Systems
- Oak-Hines Funeral Homes
- Official Time Out
- Otto Stephenitch
- Pizza Hut
- Progressive Vision Center, LTD
- Pure Green, LLC
- Renaissance Care Center
- RK Dixon
- Rhoades Real Estate & Land Auction Services, Inc.
- RISE Canton
- Scott Miller
- Security Finance
- Sedgwick Funeral Homes & Crematory
- Sherwin-Williams
- Spoon River Animal Clinic
- State Farm Insurance - Chuck Taylor
- The CBD Store
- Timbuk Tech, Inc.
- Town & Country Insurance Agency
- Unity Point Clinic of Canton
- Walgreen's of Canton
- Walmart of Canton
- WBYS AM & WCDD FM Radio
- Wee-Ma-Tuk Hills Country Club

HERE AT HOME SERIES

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

From an early age, Erika Sepich Leighton, a physical therapist with Graham Medical Group, never doubted that her love of Canton would bring her back to her hometown after college. Erika and her high school sweetheart, now husband, Chris, a bank executive at MidAmerica National Bank, live in Canton with their two young daughters.

“I love living in Canton, and all throughout my college career, I couldn’t wait to be able to go back to Canton to live,” Erika says. “I love that this is where my roots are from. My daughters are the fourth generation of Sepich Croatians residing in Canton. My dad is a Sepich and my mom was a Francisovich so we are definitely a part of the many Croatian clans who settled in the area.”

Education, sports, and small-town support were other major factors in Erika’s determination to return home, begin her career, and raise a family. The Sepich family’s connection to local sports is legendary. At Canton High School, Erika excelled in softball, volleyball, and basketball. She believes her dedication and commitment to sports came from Grandfather Rudy.

“My grandfather, Rudy Sepich and I were extremely close, and he supported me in everything I tried,” Erika recalls. “He inspired me. Many years ago, he dedicated himself to learning all he could about volleyball and eventually became Spoon River College’s first volleyball coach. My grandpa died when I was in graduate school and his visitation was packed with caring Canton people all dressed in sports gear.”

Erika also credits high school softball coach Harold Rose and basketball coach Layne Langholf with nurturing her confidence both in sports and in life.

“Mr. Rose was my softball coach during my Junior and Senior years. He believed in my capabilities and was always pushing me to believe in myself,” Erika says. “He always found the positive in every situation and was a glass half full person. When I made 2nd team All-State for softball, he drove to my house to tell me in person. He was smiling ear to ear and seeing his excitement was very encouraging.” Langholf was Erika’s basketball coach during her sophomore, junior, and senior years and taught her the importance of “teamwork, mental strength, respect, and giving it your all.” She recalls one Christmas season when the basketball team traveled to OSF Children’s Hospital to sing Christmas carols to patients in the hospital.

“This opened up my eyes to the fragility of life, the desire to make a difference, and the importance of reaching out and showing love to others,” she says. “Coach Langholf taught me that what we do off the court is so much more important than what happens on the court, and I truly respect him for that.”



(continued from page 11)

But it actually wasn't sports that led Erika to her career in physical therapy.

"I've wanted to become a physical therapist since 8th grade after writing a report on the profession," Erika says. "It was Ms. Schoon who made learning fun. I remember dissecting pigs in her class and being scared to death. She calmed my nerves, helped me, and I even enjoyed it!" In Ms. Schoon's class Erika learned all the bones in the human body and recalls having to write each bone out one by one for a test.

"I've always loved science and found the human body fascinating, but she was one of the first teachers who truly opened my eyes to the human (and pig) body, and I loved it."

Erika recalls that some of her classmates 'couldn't wait to get out of Canton' after graduation, but she has always been the opposite. After graduation from Canton High School in 2006, Erika purposefully selected Bradley University for her studies in physical therapy because of its exceptional program but also because it was close to home.

Erika lived on campus in Peoria for six years. But when she and Chris married, they chose to live in Canton and she commuted every day for her seventh and final year. When she graduated from Bradley with a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DST) degree, she immediately began working for Graham Medical Group as part of the tuition reimbursement program.

"Graham's tuition reimbursement program is excellent," Erika says. "I was able to afford my education, do an internship with Graham Medical Group, and then have a position waiting for me when I graduated." Erika worked full-time until her second daughter was born. Then Graham allowed her to switch to part-time so that she could enjoy both a professional career and motherhood. Eight years later she continues to work as a very popular physical therapist at Graham.

Perhaps Erika could receive higher wages in a large city, but she believes she is well compensated for her physical therapy services. She feels blessed to work for such a well-respected institution as Graham Medical Group and fortunate to be able to have the quality of life she's always dreamed of with family and lifelong friends nearby.

"Now I love going to work each day and being able to serve and help the community that has helped me so much. I plan to remain planted in my hometown as a "fan in the stands" to my future Little Giants,"



Erika states. "Ten years from now I will likely still be working as a physical therapist at Graham Medical Group and furthering my knowledge and expertise in a wide variety of areas including aquatic therapy, sports rehabilitation, and performance enhancement."

Current research indicates that rural areas success depends heavily on encouraging young professionals to stay, to return, or to choose small towns for life and work. Erika, along with the previously featured Here at Home young professionals – Jake Snowman, Mitchell Coonradt, Corrina Markland Pickel, Joshua Pickel, Christopher Jump, and Ashley Krulac – must certainly be counted as among Canton's best ambassadors.