

Currents

**Highlighting the people and places
of our RiverBend**



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2025

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GROWTH ASSOCIATION

Serving Business, Encouraging Growth in Southwestern Illinois



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Currents

Highlighting the people and places
of our RiverBend

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RiverBend GROWTH ASSOCIATION

Serving Business, Encouraging Growth in Southwestern Illinois

Thank you for viewing the RiverBend Growth Association's 2024-2025 edition of the CURRENTS magazine.

This publication serves as the RiverBend Growth Association's (RBGA) opportunity to highlight the people and places comprising southwestern Illinois' Riverbend region. We hope you have the same enthusiasm as we do for our area — by sharing this publication with others in the office, or on your coffee table at home.

The simple theory behind the Growth Association is the same today as when it was formed in 1985: We can improve the quality of life in this region by working together rather than separately, or at cross-purposes. We serve as the chamber of commerce and economic development organization for the communities that comprise the Riverbend. The RBGA takes great pride in the area's outstanding educational systems, local businesses, quality workforce, recreational and tourist attractions, and most importantly — our sense of community.

Please enjoy viewing and reading about the businesses, municipalities, organizations, and people that make the Riverbend the unique and wonderful place it is to call home, especially our cover story about the OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center which celebrates 100 years in 2025. The region is fortunate to have many businesses, institutions, and non-profits that support the community. The Growth Association constantly strives to develop programs and events that help our member businesses — large and small, new and old — and our communities in general.

In closing, we thank you again for your interest in the Riverbend and the Currents magazine. The RBGA is proud to share this publication with visitors, residents, and future residents alike!

Sincerely,

JOHN KELLER
STEFANIE WITHERS
DEBBIE HAGEN



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On the cover



**OSF
HEALTHCARE
MOELLER
CANCER
CENTER**

New medicine, same heart

Hospital celebrates a century of caring, compassion in the Riverbend

In December 1923, five Sisters came to the region from Germany with the intention to open a hospital.

It is said those early Sisters, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George, brought only themselves, a bag of oranges and a lot of determination — determination to make Christ's merciful love more visible.

They succeeded in their goal, opening an early iteration of what is now OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center in the former Nazareth Home in Alton. OSF Saint Anthony's is celebrating 100 years in 2025, and despite the hospital's growth over a century's worth of technological and societal advances, Saint Anthony's Vice President of Support

Services **Sister M. Beata Ziegler** said the care and compassion of those founding Sisters has been a continuous thread for the hospital from its inception to today.

"I think one of the greatest things that we have to offer anyone who walks through our doors is that they will be treated with genuine respect and dignity, as is our underlying mission — to serve with the greatest care and love," Ziegler said. "I really do believe that people that come to Saint Anthony's experience that. They know that they're not a number. They really are cared for as an individual. And on top of that, they will receive very good healthcare."

The advances over the decades are too numerous to name, but even in the 4.5

years she's been in her position with the hospital Ziegler said she's seen it grow in a number of ways. Ziegler said as healthcare has become more expensive and people's needs and wants have changed — let alone the changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic — the hospital responded by pushing further into the digital space.



Sister M. Beata Ziegler

The presence of the OSF HealthCare System, which Saint Anthony's joined in 2014, provided the small, community hospital with countless telemedicine capabilities that allowed it to reach and serve an even broader audience than it once did.

"As part of that system, we have the blessing of being connected to so many resources," Ziegler said. "During COVID, the digital healthcare space exploded. We've really tried to become more a part of that."

Despite its religious roots, one misconception of the hospital is that one needs to be similarly religious to receive care at the hospital. Ziegler said that on





the contrary, all are welcome — another pillar on which the hospital was founded.

"It's always been, whoever comes to us in need," she said.

The hospital offers comprehensive cancer, cardiovascular, urology, diabetes services and more, and has received awards and recognitions from numerous medical organizations. The OSF Moeller Cancer Center in Alton opened in 2019, and Ziegler said they've made a concerted effort to strengthen their oncology services and cardiology program, among others, in recent years.

A medical stabilization program to help patients fight substance abuse issues is one of the newest programs rolled out by the hospital. Saint Anthony's teamed

with New Vision withdrawal management service in 2023 to provide the program, including an inpatient stabilization stay to help adults deal with drug, alcohol and other substance-related issues.

"If you look at the community health needs assessment, that is always one of the big needs in the Alton area," Ziegler said.



The hospital's reach doesn't end with its main campus at 1 Saint Anthony's Way in Alton, either. Along with the telemedicine offerings,

OSF HealthCare also has a Godfrey location that features prompt care, primary care and pediatrics, and a Bethalto location with primary care physicians as well.

"All of those pieces are part of us," Ziegler said.

As Saint Anthony's looks ahead to another 100 years, providing care with love and concern for community will remain at the forefront — regardless of specialty, location or circumstance, just as those founding Sisters would have wanted.

"Even before we became part of the OSF system, we called our employees 'mission partners' because we believe that they are just that — they work with us to be able to have this mission move forward," Ziegler said. "We've always been here to serve those most in need, those who are hurting — and that foundation has never changed.

"That's the beauty of what we do here at Saint Anthony's. It may look different, but the heart that's behind it all is the same." ■



1 Saint Anthony's Way • Alton • 618-465-2571

Credit where it's due

Credit union is a pillar of financial service,
community support in Riverbend

The name Olin is synonymous with the Riverbend region.

So, too, is 1st MidAmerica Credit Union.

Both are linked by their connection with Western Cartridge Company, the East Alton business that was the impetus for the creation of the credit union nearly a century ago. Originally founded as the Western Cartridge Employees Credit Union in 1934, 1st MidAmerica Credit Union in 2024 celebrated 90 years as a fixture in the Riverbend.

"We contribute our long history of growth and success to our board of directors, who

believe in the credit union mission, and our employees, who care about our members and deliver on our promise of outstanding service," said 1st MidAmerica Credit Union President **Alan Meyer**.

In 1934, Franklin Olin determined that a credit union would benefit the employees of Western Cartridge Company in East Alton, so 35 charter members opened a credit union with an initial \$59 deposit in a file drawer of their main office. The credit union grew to 651 members with \$8,689 in deposits and \$7,378 in loans in the first year. The maximum loan allowed was set at \$1,000 and the interest rate was 1 percent per month.

The credit union grew to require its own small office, equipment and a part-time clerk, all of which were funded by the sponsor company, Western Cartridge Company. After several years in operation, the credit union was able to pay its own way. In the 1940s and 1950s, Western Cartridge Company grew aggressively through a series of mergers and acquisitions. Prompted by these changes, Western Cartridge Employees Credit Union changed its name to Olin Employees Credit Union in 1954 to reflect the new identity of the sponsor company.

As the number of employees at Olin continued to grow,

so did the membership of the credit union. By June 1965, a facility was built just outside the main gates of Olin Corporation, which provided many additional services such as drive-up lanes and easier access for family members. In 1998, the credit union charter expanded to include a multi-county area, opening its doors to the local community.

Since that time, the credit union has continued to evolve. To better reflect the communities served by the credit union, the name was changed to 1st MidAmerica Credit Union in 2010.

The branch network now includes Illinois locations in Alton, Bethalto, Decatur, Edwardsville, Godfrey, Granite City, Jerseyville, Troy, Wood River, and Independence in Missouri.

Beyond physical branches, the credit union focuses on meeting members where they are through digital services. 1st MidAmerica offers Go Live video banking, in which members can talk to a representative face-to-face from anywhere, and its ATMs offer expanded account access at any hour of the day.

1st MidAmerica remains focused on the financial well-being of its members and delivers services and tools to assist them in their journey. Its





1st MidAmerica
Credit Union

online Financial Learning Center offers dozens of learning modules for any age, including topics like budgeting, building credit, and retirement.

Its online Security Center provides up-to-date security tips, scams to watch for, and other helpful information. The credit union also offers expanded services such as Credit Score in its mobile app. Credit Score provides enrolled members with a free option for monitoring their credit, receiving alerts, and a simulation calculator that shows how paying down debt or missing payments will affect their scores.

Today, 1st MidAmerica Credit Union is headquartered in Bethalto and has 180 employees spread across 10 branch locations that serve more than 63,000 members. As the credit union looks forward, Meyer said the things that have made it successful for the past 90 years will be the same things that keep it



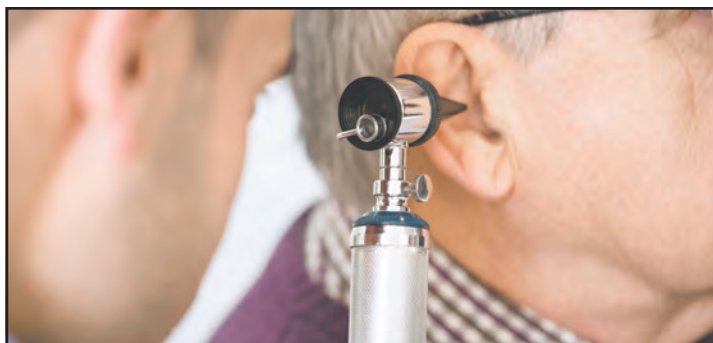
flourishing into the future.

"As we look to the next 90 years," he said, "we will remain a pillar of financial service and community support in the Riverbend area, investing in the community where our members live and work."

1st MidAmerica Credit Union has 10 branch locations, with its headquarters in Bethalto.

 1stmidamerica.org

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Keeping the lights on

Company celebrates professional, family-owned service

Throughout its 75 years in business, a through line of Camp Electric & Engineering has been that it's a family-owned company.

That's as true today as it was when William L. Camp officially founded the company in 1950 — it's just a different family now at the helm.

Jonathan and Stacey Wolff bought the company in 2022 with an eye on continuing the same level of service and professionalism the Alton area has come to expect from the Camp name.

"It has always been a family business," Stacey Wolff said. "We have utilized technology to improve our quality, bidding processes and efficiencies."

William L. Camp originally set up shop in Alton more than a century ago, running a business out of a strip mall across from the old Milton firehouse with his brother, John Henry Camp. In the early days, they sold and installed washers, dryers and furnaces.

Camp Electric was founded in 1950, and in 1956 they built a building where the business resided until 2006. In 2006, the business was moved to 3133 Washington Ave. in Alton. In early 2024, Camp Electric held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new location on Alton Commerce Parkway — keeping the business in



Alton throughout, a point of pride for the new owners.

While many of the facets of the business have remained unchanged, there are some new things afoot at Camp Electric as well. The biggest is that Stacey Wolff, who has had a hand in the business since becoming an owner in 2022, recently joined the team as a full-time employee. Among her focuses, she said, is working to get the company certified as a woman-owned business while also working to expand Camp's services within the engineering and surveying fields, which align with her own professional background.

Another new development under the Wolffs' ownership has been a shift in the type of work done by the company. Stacey Wolff said the split between residential and commercial projects

was roughly 50/50 before they took over, but now approximately 95 percent of their projects are commercial or industrial in nature. That includes construction of the 1st MidAmerica Credit Union building in Wood River, the IBEW Local 649 union hall in Alton and both designing and building two 28,000-square-foot airplane hangars for West Star Aviation in Bethalto, among many others.

That's not to say they don't still do residential projects as well. Among their services for homeowners are new construction wiring, electrical service upgrades, whole-home generators and any general electrical service work needed. Camp also does solar installations, boasting a

team of project managers and electricians with a combined 20-plus years of solar project experience.

With so much work to keep them busy, the business has had to grow internally as well. Stacey Wolff said as of today the company employs eight office workers and 30 union electricians. No matter how big or busy they get, though, they won't lose sight of the company's humble beginnings and family-rooted values.

"Getting work in our wheelhouse, appreciating our employees and clients as well and treating them right," Stacey Wolff said, "is what has been key to keeping and getting good employees and return clients." ■

 campelectricinc.com

4521 Alton Commerce Pkwy • Alton • 618-462-9287

Par for the course

Two of area's golf courses continue to roll along

Mary Campbell had big plans to celebrate Spencer T. Olin Golf Course's 35th anniversary this past July, but they fell through — literally.

The sinkhole that opened in late June in the middle of Alton's Gordon F. Moore Community Park, in which the golf course is located, caused the park to be closed for seven weeks and shelved Campbell's hopes for a grand birthday party. Not only that, but Campbell, the golf course's general manager, said they lost close to three dozen tournaments that had been scheduled at the course due to the closure.

Fortunately for Campbell and Spencer T. Olin members, the sinkhole, which opened in the middle of a nearby soccer field, did not have an impact on the course itself, and the clubhouse reopened its doors in mid-August. The lost weeks



were a setback, Campbell said, but the course is fortunate to have loyal patrons who were eager to get back on the tee box.



"It's something that happened, but if anything, it's going to bring people to the park," Campbell said.

Campbell oversees both Spencer T. Olin and nearby

Rolling Hills Golf Course in Godfrey, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2025. Spencer T. Olin Golf Course is a nearly 7,000-yard, 18-hole championship course that has the distinction of being the

only Arnold Palmer-designed golf course in the region. Rolling Hills Golf Course is an 18-hole course that plays a little over 5,600 yards and is more forgiving than its sister course.

Those contrasts help set the two courses apart, Rolling Hills general manager **Ray Morales** said, and are what make both courses enjoyable for their respective guests.

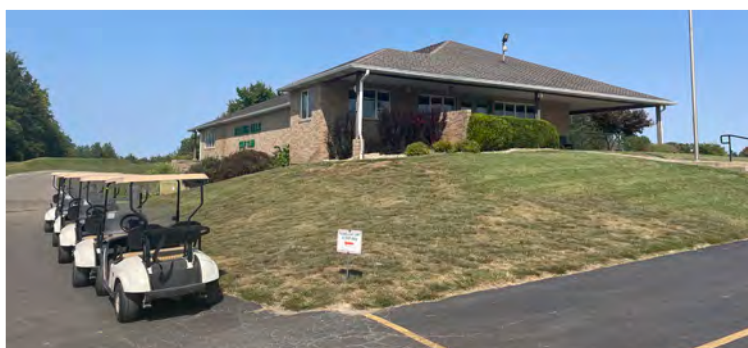
“These two courses are totally different,” Morales said. “A lot of people find Spencer T. Olin challenging, whereas Rolling Hills is a lot more beginner-friendly. We gravitate more toward the beginner and intermediate players, and families.”

Morales was only recently hired on as the general manager, but he and Campbell have been around both courses for decades. That includes when Spencer T. Olin was owned by Dallas, Texas-based Century Golf Partners Management, and treated largely as an afterthought by the out-of-town management company.

Now owned by Alton businessman **Vern Van Hoy**, Campbell said the local ownership’s attention to the course, the clubhouse and the property in general is noticeable.

“I think that we’ve improved since that time,” Campbell said. “We have more of a passion. They put time and investment into us.”

As far as where both courses



go from here, Campbell said her focus will remain on investing in Spencer T. Olin, specifically keeping the course in great shape and attracting more major tournaments like the two-day 32nd Metropolitan Women’s Amateur Championship that’s set to be hosted at the course in October.

At Rolling Hills, Morales, whose background is in hospitality, said he hopes to “keep building on what we’re doing now — a family-friendly

atmosphere, and more of a community-based golf course.”

“We want to be for the everyday golfer, the person that just wants to come out and have fun,” Morales said. “If they’re a little intimidated by Spencer T., they can come out to Rolling Hills and have a great time.” ■

 spencertolingturf.com

4701 College Ave. Alton 618-465-3111

 rollinghillsgc.com

5801 Pierce Lane Godfrey 618-466-8363





RBGA Young Adults Committee launches another year of learning and serving

Every start of a new school year means another new session for the RiverBend Growth Association's Young Adults Committee.

The Young Adults Committee (YAC) consists of student representatives participating from Alton, Civic Memorial, East Alton-Wood River, Marquette Catholic, and Roxana high schools. Two senior student representatives and two juniors comprise the committee.

Throughout the school year, students enhance their public speaking, leadership, organization,

time management, sales and marketing skills. From December through April, YAC members learn about area community-based nonprofit organizations, develop their professional skills and further their commitment to community service.

During this time, the committee also plans an event to raise money and gain the skills necessary to design, organize, and host a fundraiser. The money they raise from the fundraiser is awarded in the form of multiple scholarships and to one nonprofit organi-

zation. Each YAC member is scored individually and those students who show high levels of professionalism and active involvement are eligible to receive a scholarship which is presented at the RBGA Chamber Choice Awards in May.

YAC members leave with letters of recommendation for future endeavors and with the continued benefits of lifelong friendships and ongoing professional relationships.

Several RBGA business members volunteer their time and knowledge to mentor our students. Those mentors

include **John Barnerd** of Simmons Hanly Conroy, **Brian Campbell** of Colman's Country Campers, **Terri Herbstreit** with 1st MidAmerica Credit Union, **Tiffany James** with Midwest Members Credit Union, and **Taylor Justice** of Beverly Farm Foundation.

RBGA Member Engagement Director **Stefanie Withers** facilitates the Young Adults Committee's various activities, mentoring, and partnering efforts. ■

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Alton	25,031	39.95	11,074	\$51,534	<i>cityofaltonil.com</i>
East Alton	5,657	41.07	2,571	\$51,670	<i>villageofeastaltonil.gov</i>
Elsah	561	33.87	185	\$89,079	<i>escapetoelsah.com</i>
Godfrey	17,633	47.57	7,346	\$81,101	<i>visitgodfrey.com</i>
Grafton	651	51.70	284	\$82,375	<i>cityofgraftonil.com</i>
Hartford	1,117	43.32	503	\$42,788	<i>hartfordillinois.net</i>
Roxana	1,447	39.62	628	\$55,893	<i>roxana-il.org</i>
Wood River	10,449	41.13	4,539	\$66,336	<i>woodriver.org</i>

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From Paris with love

East Alton, Godfrey natives shine bright at Summer Games

A pair of Riverbend athletes took the national — and international — stage this past summer.

East Alton native **Jayden Ulrich** represented her country in the discus throw at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, and a few weeks later Godfrey resident **Eric Newby** helped guide the USA Wheelchair Rugby team to a silver medal in the Paralympics.

In advance of this year's Paralympics competition, the village of Godfrey declared Aug. 29 as "Eric Newby Day." The silver medal was Newby's third in Paralympics competition, and he was a co-captain of this year's squad.

Newby said the community has been "incredibly supportive" of him and the team.

"Every time I go out, I get congratulated in some fashion," Newby said. "Leading up to the Games, it was an honor to have a day named after me. I often think about

my 'why' when I'm doing long training days, and this silver medal was for my family and this community."

For Ulrich, the 2024 Summer Games were her first. She was celebrated with a homecoming party complete with a parade and ceremony at the new Wood River Recreation Center, near where Ulrich attended high school a few blocks away at East Alton-Wood River High School.

"It's really amazing how many people have stood behind me," the 2021 EA-WR graduate said in a statement. "I truly appreciate everything and everyone who has helped along the way and I really want to do something in return."

During the ceremony, both Wood River Mayor **Tom Stalcup** and East Alton Mayor **Darren Carlton** presented Ulrich with keys to the city. The day, Aug. 10, was proclaimed "Jayden Ulrich Day."

"I can remember Jayden three years ago," Carlton said. "When she won

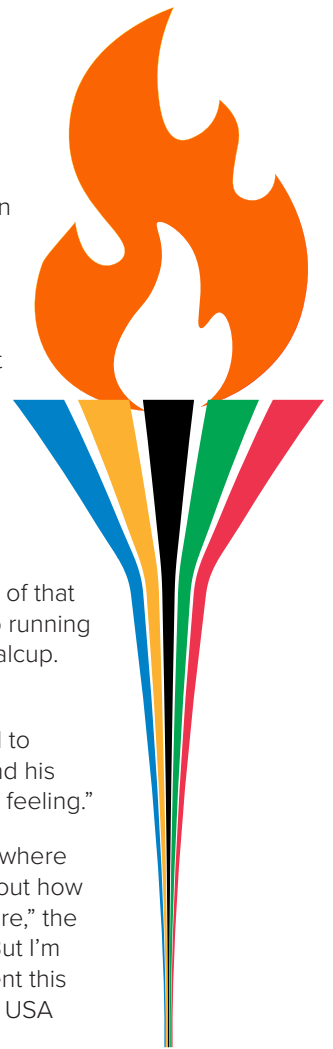
state, we did a proclamation for her for being the state champion. We read the proclamation and (former East Alton village trustee) **Phil Keesler** said, 'We want to do this again, only this time for the Olympics.' And here we are."

Ulrich, 21, is a senior at the University of Louisville.

"When I see Jayden, I think of that little girl all those years ago running with my grandkids," said Stalcup. "We are so proud of you."

Newby said being selected to represent his hometown and his country is an "unbelievable feeling."

"In reality, it doesn't matter where you came from — it's all about how hard you worked to get there," the 36-year-old Newby said. "But I'm incredibly proud to represent this community when I put on a USA jersey." ■

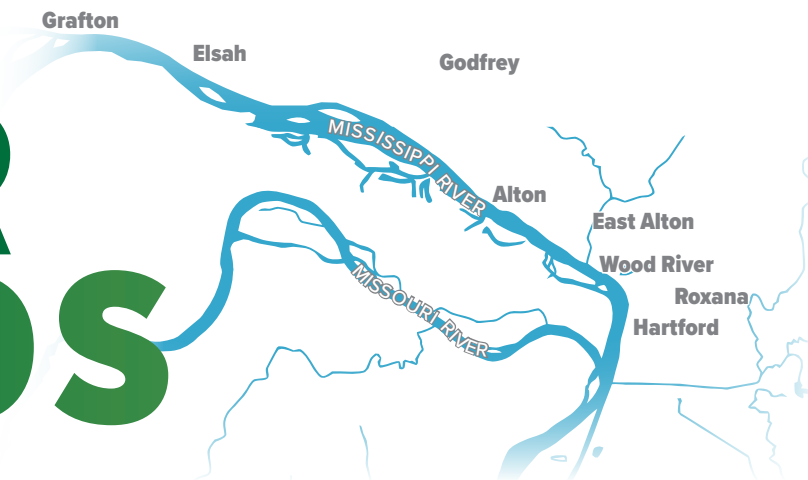


Eric Newby



Jayden Ulrich

As the RIVER BENDS



“Know whence you came. If you know whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go.”

Those words from writer and civil rights activist James Baldwin to his nephew were in regard to a heavier topic, but they still ring no less true today than they did when he wrote them more than 60 years ago. With no past experience to lean on, we move forward into the future with nothing to ground us, rudderless ships adrift at sea.

With that in mind, and with another round of mayoral elections on the horizon, we asked our local municipal leaders to reflect on their terms and whether they feel any different today than they did three years ago. To move forward — as a leader, as a municipality, as a Riverbend region as a whole — we must first understand where we’ve been, after all.

QUESTION 1 • *Three years ago, I asked what you wanted to accomplish during your term in office. Looking back on it, did you do what you had hoped? If not, is there something else that you accomplished that you find to be equally or even more impactful for your town’s future?*

QUESTION 2 • *In that same interview, I also asked what you would tell someone if they asked why you’re proud to be your town’s mayor. With the added perspective of the past three years, has that answer changed?*

Alton

DAVID GOINS

1 • Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on the goals I set three years ago. I am pleased to share that I have successfully accomplished several key objectives across various areas in regard to financial recovery, economic development, public safety, infrastructure improvement, business development, and community engagement. Overall, I am proud of the progress made in these areas and look forward to continuing this work in the future.

2 • As the mayor of this city, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the opportunity to serve a community that has shaped who I am. Being born and raised here, I have witnessed firsthand the unique spirit and

resilience of our residents. This city is not just where I grew up; it is a place filled with memories, connections, and deep-rooted values that guide my leadership.

Serving as mayor allows me to give back to a community that has given me so much. It is an incredible honor to work alongside dedicated individuals who share a passion for progress and betterment. Together, we tackle challenges, celebrate successes, and strive to create a brighter future for all our residents.

Every decision I make and every initiative we implement is rooted in a genuine love for this city and its people. I am committed

to fostering inclusivity, encouraging collaboration, and supporting the diverse voices that make our community vibrant. This role enables me to champion important causes and create positive change, and I am deeply grateful for the trust placed in me by my fellow citizens.

In serving as mayor, I hope to inspire others to become involved, to engage with one another, and to take pride in our shared home. My love for this city motivates me every day, and I am excited about the journey ahead as we work together to build a brighter future for generations to come. Thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve as your mayor.

East Alton

DARREN CARLTON

1 • My initial response to this question three years ago was SURVIVE! I have to be honest and tell all of you, being the mayor is the most satisfying job I have had the pleasure of doing. The feedback from the citizens has been very receptive, and I truly enjoy being the mayor.

Three years ago, I stated I wanted to keep the great services the Village of East Alton has and to continue those same services at a high level. I believe we have done just that. The village's Public Works Department continues to be one of the

best in the area with minimal staff, and those employees there will also put the citizens and the village first.

One thing that I find I'm equally proud of is putting more police officers on the street. When I took over as mayor, the village had 10 full-time police officers. We currently have 12 and are in the process of hiring the 13th police officer, which would be the most since 1997.

The other thing that has come up over the last three years is the number of

free family events we have put together so families can have fun without great expense. There are many in town, but I am most proud of the "Night of Christmas."

2 • I was raised in the town, and this town offers some advantages to families who wish to call East Alton their home. This small-town atmosphere allows people to get to know each other and help when needed. This also allows the village to put on events with little to no expense to the participants and no expenses taken from the taxpayers.

Elsah

MIKE PITCHFORD

1 • Working with a great board, we have secured the surrounding lots and property that directly impact the community. Actually, it will take years to do some of the hoped-for development along the creek from the River Road all the way to the northern village limits, but future mayors and boards will have the ability to continue to enhance the quality of life and beauty of the community as they see fit. Given time, my hope is that there is

a continuous ribbon of plants and trees in natural settings that invite residents and visitors to sit and absorb the nature around them. I am proud of the start we have made toward that goal, but much more needs to be done.

One project that is nearing completion is the Riverview property that everyone sees immediately upon turning in off of the River Road. As with everything, there

is much that needs to be accomplished but I believe this will provide an enticing entrance into our town.

2 • I am pleased to have had the opportunity to work with board members, employees and residents to address the challenges and opportunities that are available to us. It has had its challenges and disappointing moments, but looking backwards is not my strong suit.

Godfrey

MIKE MCCORMICK

1 • For the past 15 years, I have been proud to serve as the mayor of the Village of Godfrey. Questions asked of me at the beginning of my current term, and going back to my very first term, have centered around the goals I have and the vision I possess for our community. My answers today have a similar feel — to keep our town thriving and safe. To welcome and support new businesses. To provide beautiful parks with opportunities for all to play, exercise, and participate. To continue to be financially solvent but not on the backs of our tax-paying citizens.

All of these goals are things I work toward every day, along with our village trustees and employees. We've seen numerous new businesses open and are working hard to bring more. Glazebrook Park has seen a major expansion and draws thousands from all over the area to our recreation programs. The tax levy has not been raised once in my 15 years and, in fact, has been lowered several of those years. Progress has been made in extending Lars Hoffman from Godfrey Road to Pierce Lane, in upgrading Pierce Lane, and in bringing the F.E. Widman Bike Path to fruition.

2 • I've been so honored to serve as the mayor of Godfrey. I'm proud of Godfrey's beauty, its financial stability, and its citizens. We've invested money and effort and, along with our local media outlets, have developed incentive programs and a tourism website to attract families and businesses to our community. Godfrey has a very neighborly feel, and as such, we've implemented the "Godfrey Good Neighbor" program to recognize citizens who go above and beyond to make Godfrey a wonderful place to live and work. Godfrey will always be home to me, and I'm proud to be its mayor.

continued next page ►

◀ (continued)

QUESTION 1 • Three years ago, I asked what you wanted to accomplish during your term in office. Looking back on it, did you do what you had hoped? If not, is there something else that you accomplished that you find to be equally or even more impactful for your town's future?

QUESTION 2 • In that same interview, I also asked what you would tell someone if they asked why you're proud to be your town's mayor. With the added perspective of the past three years, has that answer changed?

Grafton

MIKE MORROW

1 • My three campaign early goals were accomplished: 1. We quickly settled the city/marina lawsuit and brought peace to the city; 2. The feasibility study of a full-time Grafton Ferry has been completed and we are now in the process of establishing a Task Force to implement the recommendations; 3. I continue to donate my mayoral salary back to the city to be utilized by the police, administration and Public Works departments. We have set a policy of transparency with a three-pronged approach: 1. Keeping residents informed of city updates and events

through my quarterly Mayor's Newsletter; 2. Livestreaming and recording all city council meetings on YouTube; 3. We are in the process of creating a memorial in Grafton to honor all veterans.

2 • I am proud to be the mayor of Grafton because we have worked hard to make life better for our citizens as well as to attract new businesses and families to our river town. Grafton has been named the second-fastest-growing city in the state of Illinois by the U.S. Census Bureau. We continue to apply for grants

to upgrade our infrastructure, parks and Main Street curb appeal to support our tourism industry. We have updated and implemented a comprehensive flood/natural disaster emergency plan for the city, and we coordinate and exercise regularly with county and state emergency units. Our City Hall employees and Public Works and Police Departments work hard to serve our community, placing the citizens' needs first to make Grafton a better place to live and work. I am proud to be a part of this dedicated and devoted team.

Hartford

BILL ROBERTSON

1 • Three years ago, my goal was to bring in businesses to increase our tax base, assuring our residents that we wouldn't raise taxes at the local level. Currently, we are in the last phases of bringing a corporation called LKQ into our New Poag Road brownfields area, and they should be breaking ground sometime in October 2024. We have also had property at our Route 3 and Piasa Lane location reserved by a corporation for the development of retail stores and should hear from them within the next few months if they are

moving forward with their project. Our Route 111 properties have been listed as a top-five site in Illinois by the state of Illinois, and we are receiving multiple inquiries on it.

2 • I'm very proud of being the mayor of Hartford. I have great employees who take their work for our citizens seriously and do a great job for us. With input from the community, we recently moved our veteran's memorial to a quiet place of honor in our 7th Street Park.

We are bringing small businesses into our town and have taken our Christmas plans to a higher level with new and expanded Christmas lighting this coming year. The village board and I have been able to do all this with three years of general fund surpluses.

It is a credit to the citizens of Hartford for making this a great place to live and work and, yes, that makes me proud.



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Roxana

MARTY REYNOLDS

1 • Did I accomplish what I hoped to in this term as village president? The answer is yes and no, and it's still a work in progress!

I wanted to develop new opportunities for residential growth in Roxana. I blame the pandemic for the economic climate we are in today. That seems to directly have played into the housing market. How can you explain the rationale for where housing prices are today? Supply and demand, I guess. This has driven the cost of building or acquiring even a modest home to extremes. The village has purchased several properties that have been in disrepair and removed the structures. I have not been able to develop affordable new housing in Roxana yet, but we have made some

progress in cleaning up our community and improving the quality of life.

Another goal was to run local government as it was intended to be, and I feel that goal is in the plus column. I understand that is a subjective opinion, but government should work for the people not for itself.

This year, Roxana posted its lowest corporate tax rate in its history. We have worked and will continue to do so with the goal of maintaining an environment for our major industries and businesses to operate in while making sustainable profit.

2 • What's next? We are in the final planning stages to begin the replacement of all cast-iron water mains and steel water service lines to each home or water customer. Our water system in most locations is nearly 100 years old. EPA regulations dealing

with future water quality parameters are driving some of this project.

Proceeding with this project blends well with our constant goal of operating and maintaining our public services to the highest level. This will be the biggest project Roxana has undertaken.

Funding for this undertaking will be through a U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development loan that has been secured. The improvements we are planning are anticipated to cost \$15 million. Payment for this loan will require that we raise water rates to support the debt service for a portion of this project. The balance of the costs will be paid for from existing village funds and loans from a local lender. We have not raised water rates in the last 18 years.

Wood River

TOM STALCUP

1 • I don't exactly remember what my response was three years ago, but I can tell you what we have accomplished or have in the works: We became more transparent by expanding the city's webpage and adding the City Council agendas and minutes, along with the laws and ordinances; improvements to curbs and sidewalks, replacing broken areas across the city; flooding issues on the east side have been corrected with retention ponds, and we are able to market this area for new businesses; the

new, 35,000-square-foot Rec Center has been completed and is a great asset to our city; and the sewer separation project on the west side should be complete in spring 2025.

With the retirement of Jim Schnieder, Wood River's city manager for over 30 years, we moved Steve Palen to the city manager position from Public Works, where he was director for over 20 years. Steve's knowledge of Wood River gave us the advantage to move forward with the major projects listed above securely.

2 • I am proud of the fact that we can take on the major projects listed above. The dedication and knowledge of our department heads makes this happen. Fiscally, we are sound. The improvements completed and being worked on make Wood River a great place to live and to visit.

We are not finished. I've decided to run for re-election, and hopefully the citizens of Wood River feel as good as I do with what we've accomplished to this point and will vote me back in. We will strive to make Wood River a great place to live.

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RIVERBEND GROWTH ASSOCIATION:

Many things to many businesses

The RiverBend Growth Association (RBGA) is a membership-based organization comprised of large and small businesses, government entities, schools, and nonprofit organizations. Services for the membership include networking opportunities, promotional opportunities, internet exposure, marketing assistance, business advocacy, and publication of events and specials.

Says Member Engagement Director **Stefanie Withers**, "We've got great activities and events; we are a great source of information and provide an affordable way to promote your business, and you become a bigger part of your community."

The RBGA hosts networking events, ribbon cuttings, awards

a Small Business of the Month, and spotlights a nonprofit organization monthly. We hold annual events including the LeadHERship Seminar, RiverBend Golf Classic, Fall Festival and Chamber Choice Awards.

These events and networking meetings give the members numerous opportunities to be in the right rooms, with the right people, with the appropriate introductions to establish instant credibility. The events are well-run, an efficient use of our members' time, and affordable for small and large businesses because of the generous sponsorships of our members.

"Whether a representative from

your business comes to every networking opportunity or a business simply belongs to have a community presence, the RBGA is worth the investment in YOUR business," says

Debbie Hagen,
Communications
Director.

The RBGA team and committee members hear from members that "they don't have time" to attend meetings or events. Members don't have to attend anything to still get value from a membership. The RBGA promotes its member businesses to other members, to residents and visitors requesting information, and to businesses new to the community. Our members' events are promoted through weekly e-newsletters, online and on Facebook. The RBGA

team and volunteers celebrate members' anniversaries, grand openings, and expansions.

Building YOUR business is about building relationships, and the RBGA can help. We continue to work with our area businesses on their needs and we work with the local municipalities to grow our local economy.

The Growth Association, never content to stand still, rather always moving forward, relies on its members and their input to keep its programs current and worthwhile.

To join your local business community, go to growthassociation.com/join. ■



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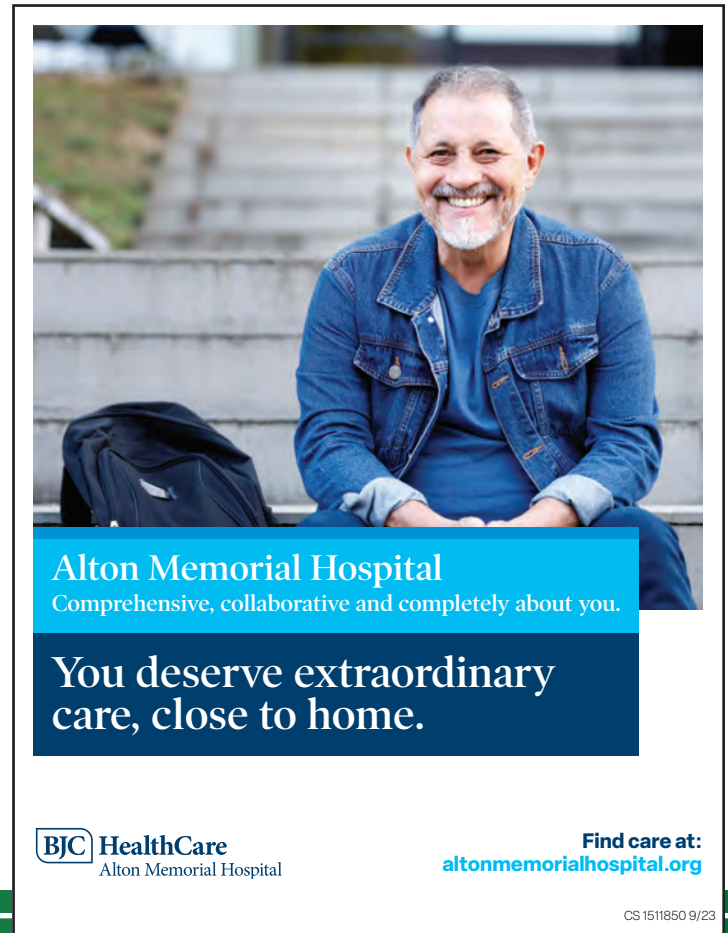
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MyRiverbendStory

CONNIE & GARY DAVIS

The people, the food, the culture — there's no doubt that there's something uniquely special about the region we affectionately call the Riverbend. Don't just take our word for it, though. We asked some local entrepreneurs who call the Riverbend home what it is that made them fall in love — and keeps them in love — with it.

In this MyRiverbendStory feature, Connie Davis, who co-owns the Green Tree Inn in Elsah with her husband, Gary, reminisces about the couple's winding journey that brought them to the Riverbend.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS IN A PLACE AND STARTING A BUSINESS THERE ARE BOTH WEIGHTY DECISIONS. HOW DID YOU END UP IN THE RIVERBEND — EITHER PERSONALLY, PROFESSIONALLY OR BOTH — AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO START A BUSINESS HERE?

Gary and I are from Springfield, Mo., and always had a dream of owning a bed and breakfast. In 2011, our daughter and her husband moved to Greenville, Ill. Shortly after, the company where I worked as a general manager was sold. We felt like that was our sign that we should pursue our dream and move closer to our daughter.

We looked at several B&Bs along the Katy Trail in Missouri and in St. Charles, Mo. Then we heard about Green Tree Inn located in Elsah. We had never heard of Elsah or the Riverbend area and knew nothing about it. I still remember the first day we drove down the Great River Road and drove into Elsah. We were immediately in love with the area, and the Inn felt like home. Twelve years later, we are still happy with our decision to make Elsah our home.

IN THAT SAME VEIN, IF ANOTHER ENTREPRENEUR APPROACHED YOU AND SAID THEY WERE THINKING ABOUT OPENING A BUSINESS IN THE RIVERBEND, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM?

I would tell them to go for it. But, be prepared to work hard. I would encourage them to become involved with all the great networking opportunities available in the area. We have enjoyed working with the RiverBend Growth Association, Great Rivers and Routes, the Grafton Chamber of Commerce and the Village of Elsah. They have helped us grow our business, and we have made some great friends.

FINALLY, AND SIMPLY — WHAT IS IT THAT YOU LOVE ABOUT THE RIVERBEND?

There are so many things to love. We never tire of the drive on the Great River Road or enjoying all the great local restaurants. But the thing we love most is the friendships we have made since moving here. The Riverbend is a great place to live and work! ■



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MyRiverbendStory

ROB & MAC LENHARDT

The people, the food, the culture — there's no doubt that there's something uniquely special about the region we affectionately call the Riverbend. Don't just take our word for it, though. We asked some local entrepreneurs who call the Riverbend home what it is that made them fall in love — and keeps them in love — with it.

In this installment of MyRiverbendStory, Rob Lenhardt of Mac's Downtown in Alton remembers his upbringing helping his father, Mac Lenhardt, build the business into what it's become today.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS IN A PLACE AND STARTING A BUSINESS THERE ARE BOTH WEIGHTY DECISIONS. HOW DID YOU END UP IN THE RIVERBEND — EITHER PERSONALLY, PROFESSIONALLY OR BOTH — AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO START A BUSINESS HERE?

I was fortunate enough to have grown up in the Riverbend area, and also fortunate to have an opportunity to continue and grow a business that my father started back in 1983. Through its ups and downs — and trials and tribulations — I like to think Mac's has become something of a staple in the area. We offer a variety of different sorts of entertainment and a wide variety of food.

We have only just started, too — some of our projects are wrapping up after years of work, and many more exciting things are on the horizon to bring to the Riverbend area!

IN THAT SAME VEIN, IF ANOTHER ENTREPRENEUR APPROACHED YOU AND SAID THEY WERE THINKING ABOUT OPENING A BUSINESS IN THE RIVERBEND, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM?

From young to old and everything in between, there is something special about the atmosphere that comes along with what the Riverbend brings.

FINALLY, AND SIMPLY — WHAT IS IT THAT YOU LOVE ABOUT THE RIVERBEND?

The community feeling that the Riverbend brings is something special, a large, tight-knit group of people that always shows support and is there with a helping hand. After all, it's the people that make up a community. I'd like to say the Riverbend area has a strong one! ■



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MyRiverbendStory

MELISSA ANN BELL-YATES

The people, the food, the culture — there's no doubt that there's something uniquely special about the region we affectionately call the Riverbend. Don't just take our word for it, though. We asked some local entrepreneurs who call the Riverbend home what it is that made them fall in love — and keeps them in love — with it.

In this edition of MyRiverbendStory, Melissa Ann Bell-Yates, owner of Rustic Roots in Wood River, tells us why Wood River is where she chooses to live, work and play.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS IN A PLACE AND STARTING A BUSINESS THERE ARE BOTH WEIGHTY DECISIONS. HOW DID YOU END UP IN THE RIVERBEND — EITHER PERSONALLY, PROFESSIONALLY OR BOTH — AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO START A BUSINESS HERE?

I grew up in Wood River. In fact, I have lived almost my entire life on the same block. As a child I watched my grandfather become a thriving businessman in the area, building several homes and businesses as Worcester & Bell Construction Company. I grew up watching this man who raised me not only build a successful business but also be involved in the community.

Fast forward to today, I am now running a business out of the same place my grandfather did. At the time of deciding to open a shop — then add an event space — the decision was a fairly easy one to make. I wanted to create a unique place to shop, I wanted a place for people to celebrate that was different, and I wanted to give back to my community. Where else but to invest in the place that made you who you are?



IN THAT SAME VEIN, IF ANOTHER ENTREPRENEUR APPROACHED YOU AND SAID THEY WERE THINKING ABOUT OPENING A BUSINESS IN THE RIVERBEND, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM?

My only advice to those wanting to open a business is ... DO IT! Life is too short!

FINALLY, AND SIMPLY — WHAT IS IT THAT YOU LOVE ABOUT THE RIVERBEND?

I love what the shop and event space has brought into my life. The connections and relationships that I have formed over the years have been immeasurable. I am grateful for those that have supported me and supported the shop. I believe I have the best team and the most loyal customers! ■



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MyRiverbendStory

BARBARA CORBY

The people, the food, the culture — there's no doubt that there's something uniquely special about the region we affectionately call the Riverbend. Don't just take our word for it, though. We asked some local entrepreneurs who call the Riverbend home what it is that made them fall in love — and keeps them in love — with it.

In this MyRiverbendStory section, Barbara Corby, executive director of Step By Step early care and education centers in Alton, Bethalto and Brighton, discusses how she came to the Riverbend — and why she never left.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS IN A PLACE AND STARTING A BUSINESS THERE ARE BOTH WEIGHTY DECISIONS. HOW DID YOU END UP IN THE RIVERBEND — EITHER PERSONALLY, PROFESSIONALLY OR BOTH — AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO START A BUSINESS HERE?

Step By Step opened in 1993, as our founder found that she wanted somewhere for her children and families in the Alton area to have a place where their children would be welcomed and loved. She grew the program to multiple locations in the Riverbend, as childcare was tough to find for many.

In 2008, I moved to the Riverbend area to become a childcare director at Step By Step. I found that the Riverbend area quickly became not just where I lived, but my forever home. I discovered that there were so many activities, business options — and of course, I found my love of the childcare business.

In 2013, our founder decided to retire, and I found myself with the option to buy. I knew that the Riverbend had a continued need for childcare and that this was my chance to keep in place the roots that Step By Step had planted in the community.

Over time, I learned there was still a further need for space for more families to receive quality care. Therefore, I expanded by building a brand-new facility serving the Roxana School District! This facility expanded to 123 children, making it one of the largest programs in the area. The Riverbend family has been so overwhelmingly positive about our new expanded program, and we hope to continue to give back to the community through our care as well.



IN THAT SAME VEIN, IF ANOTHER ENTREPRENEUR APPROACHED YOU AND SAID THEY WERE THINKING ABOUT OPENING A BUSINESS IN THE RIVERBEND, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM?

Being approached about whether to start a business in the Riverbend area, I would 100 percent say, do it! The customer base and the love for staying local is evident. The leadership in the area and support structure is there to help a business succeed with a little hard work! Get involved with local organizations such as the RiverBend Growth Association to ensure your name gets out there.

FINALLY, AND SIMPLY — WHAT IS IT THAT YOU LOVE ABOUT THE RIVERBEND?

For me, the Riverbend is a place to get the life of the city without losing my love of country living. Within a few minutes, you can enjoy the picturesque views of the river, drive down a city street, walk a



wooded path, or get your shopping in. Whatever you need, it is close to home with a small-town feel. Seeing a smiling face that you know is so much better than being surrounded by strangers. The Riverbend is my home, and there is no place where I would rather raise my family and grow my business! ■



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MRI removal paves way for newest technology

Alton Memorial Hospital's commitment to provide excellent care to our community is growing by replacing a 3T MRI machine with the newest technology.

The existing 3T MRI was taken out of service and the exterior wall was opened in late July. Removal of the machine resulted in the complete closure of the circle drive outside Alton Memorial for several hours. It will take several months to ready the new space, with the new MRI scheduled for delivery in early December.

This work will bring a second new MRI to campus in 2024. A new 1.5T MRI became operational in April.

"Alton Memorial and Twin Rivers MRI are excited to provide this amazing service to our community," says **Cindy Dickinson**, manager of Twin Rivers MRI. "The scanner installed earlier this year has a larger bore, which can accommodate larger patients and reduce claustrophobia. That new scanner increases both image quality and workflow speed, improving the efficiency of the diagnostic process."

Magnetic Resonance Imaging is an advanced imaging process that uses radio waves and magnetic fields

to produce images in a non-invasive way. It is used to scan for various health concerns like concussions, brain injuries, tissue damage, organ damage, bone damage, and ligament damage. It is also helpful in evaluating musculoskeletal/orthopedic injuries in complicated clinical presentations and symptoms, or in cases where patients are experiencing a delayed recovery from their injuries.

"We strive to consistently improve the accessibility, comfort and quality of health care for our community," Dickinson says.

Please call Twin Rivers MRI at 618-433-6689 with any questions or to schedule an appointment. ■

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OSF Saint Anthony's flexes cardiology services 'muscle'

With heart disease affecting so many Americans, it's important to know you have the right team of doctors and care available close to home. OSF Saint Anthony's Health Care has welcomed eight cardiologists to the Riverbend region through an ongoing strategic affiliation with SLUCare Physician Group in St. Louis, part of SSM Health.

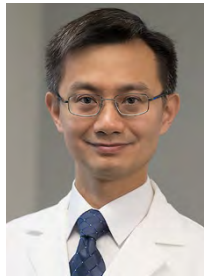
These cardiologists bring expertise and the latest technology and best practices in heart care to OSF Saint Anthony's.

"A strong cardiology services specialty program is vital to any hospital of any size, no matter its geographic location," says **Lisa Schepers**, interim president, OSF Saint Anthony's. "By fully embracing our meaningful collaboration with SLUCare Physician Group, we're able to bring exceptional medical and surgical cardiologists to the Riverbend region."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, women, and people of most racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Annually, it's estimated that 695,000 Americans die of heart disease – that's one in every five deaths.



Kishore Harjai



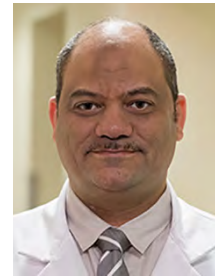
Chien-Jung Lin



Mina Mehanni



Phillip Mar



Ahmed Hussein



Divya Ratan Verma



Abdalla Hassan



Shilpkumar Arora



Laurinda Harjai



Margy Goetten

"OSF Saint Anthony's and SSM Health share a commitment of delivering high-quality, compassionate, and affordable care to our communities," said **Jeremy Fotheringham**, Regional President, SSM Health. "Our strategic affiliation with OSF Saint Anthony's allows us to bring the expertise of our heart care team at SLUCare Physician Group to the Alton community. Together, we're making sure every patient gets exceptional care that is local, integrated, and accessible to the latest innovations in cardiac care and treatment."

The SLUCare Physician Group providers recently welcomed at OSF Saint Anthony's include:

- **Kishore Harjai**, MD, Chair, Department of Cardiology, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

- **Chien-Jung Lin**, MD, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

- **Mina Mehanni**, MD, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

- **Phillip Mar**, MD, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

- **Ahmed Hussein**, MD, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

- **Divya Ratan Verma**, MD, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

- **Abdalla Hassan**, MD, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

- **Shilpkumar Arora**, MD, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

Rounding out the Cardiology Services team at OSF Saint Anthony's are two advanced practitioners with OSF Medical Group - Cardiology in Alton:

- **Laurinda Harjai**, DNP, FNP, RN-BC

- **Margy Goetten**, APRN ■

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- Lisa M. Fritcher, PA
- Shawn M. Fry, MD
- Michael S. Klein, MD
- Yusuf A. Mohyuddin, MD
- Manju Ramchandani, MD
- Colin M. Solomon, APRN
- Roxanne Strohbeck, APRN

Bethalto

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OSF Medical Group – Primary Care
404 West Bethalto Drive, Bethalto
Schedule at: (618) 377-6410 or
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Providers

- Courtney M. McFarlin, PA
- Rajnikant K. Patel, MD

Godfrey

- Monday-Friday,
7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

OSF Medical Group – Primary Care
6702 Godfrey Road, Godfrey
Schedule at: (618) 467-1520 or
osfmychart.org

Providers

- Colin Butterfield, MD
- Susan Reynolds, MD
- Bethany Huelskoetter, APRN
- Lucas Edwards, PA
- Lisa Reid, APRN



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