

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
& PLANNING
DEPARTMENT



Business News

Volume 8, Issue 1

Winter/Spring 2015

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Mayor's Message

For a long time, Park Forest struggled as a food and retail desert. A common complaint among residents was "Why do we have to go to another town for a loaf of bread or for paper towels?"

The 7-Eleven store on Sauk Trail was our sole retail outlet for many years. Then we were fortunate enough to attract the Family Dollar store first to the now demolished Norwood Square Shopping Plaza and then to its current location on Orchard Drive. We've had the Farmers Market as a resource for fresh produce for many years, but that was a seasonally-limited opportunity until the South Suburban Food Co-op opened the doors for its store on Forest Boulevard. Not too long ago, a winter market was set up on two Sundays per month during the colder season at the former St. Irenaeus School building. More recently, Dollar General constructed a store on Main Street. And now we have the Country Squire Foods store, a **full-service grocery store**, right in our downtown.

It's been a struggle, exacerbated by the disastrous economic downturn that hit the nation and our region beginning in 2008, and by the fact that our town doesn't have the high traffic patterns of some of our neighboring communities. But we've struggled through

those challenges and now we can enjoy the rewards of our hard work.

Occasionally people will comment that prices on some of the items sold at our local stores is not competitive with the prices offered by the big-box retailers. While I can appreciate their concern about this – we all try to stretch the dollar as far as it will go – I always point out that those larger stores have many advantages that our smaller local retailers do not. Large stores as a rule gravitate to very high-traffic areas, which means their customer-base is much broader than what smaller local entities experience. If merchants can move greater amounts of goods at a faster pace, obviously they are in a position to offer some items at a slightly cheaper cost.

Our local merchants, however, have chosen to invest in **our** community. They too could have gone to those higher-traffic areas, but they chose to be part of **our** town. They contribute to **our** local property tax base and generate sales taxes. Overall, the pennies extra that the consumer pays for items at the smaller local stores comes back to **our** community multifold, which thus offers the opportunity for lower taxes for everyone in **our** Village.

My wife and I know first-hand how difficult it is for local

businesses to compete with the mega-enterprises found in some other communities. Throughout the fourteen years we operated our coffeehouse/bookstore business in Park Forest, we would have loved to lower our prices, or increase our merchandise offerings, or do more advertising, but it was a struggle just to keep the doors open. As such, knowing what they face, I have high admiration for those who have decided to locate in our community, and I am eager to give them my wholehearted support in any ways I can.

The Park Forest Village Board, our professional economic development team, and the volunteers who serve on our Economic Development Advisory Group are eager to help our local businesses grow. Our quarterly business breakfast sessions are part of our agenda to assist local business. However, other tools also are available. I encourage our local business owners to sit down with our economic development team and explore more ways that we can collaborate to make commerce in Park Forest as viable as possible. ■

John A. Ostenburg
Mayor

Pick 3 Businesses
Spend \$50 Each Month
Always Shop Locally First!

Bree Breedlove Named Business Person of the Year

BREE BREEDLOVE, State Farm Insurance, is Park Forest's Business Person of the Year for 2014. Breedlove's office is located at 2562 Western Avenue, (708) 747-2425, since relocating to that location in 2012.

Breedlove was presented with the award during the Village Board meeting on December 1 by EDAG Committee Member, Phillip Perkins.

Bree Breedlove, came to Park Forest with over 20 years of experience with State Farm Insurance when she was appointed to fill a vacancy in the Park Forest office in 2003. She started at 27 North Street. As her business grew and client needs changed, she sought a more visible location and purchased a stand alone building at 2562 Western Avenue. She overhauled the building, adding many energy savings technologies from touchless water faucets to motion sensor lights.

For the 2014 Business Person of the Year, Bree received eight nominations. For more than fifteen years, Bree has sponsored a Bike Rodeo in conjunction with the Park Forest Police Department. She also conducts car seat safety checks, sponsors back to school events, participates in Black History Month events and has a grand float in the Park Forest 4th of July parade. In 2014, Bree volunteered at the Park Forest Carnival in support of the Youth Commission. She encourages networking and permits customers to use her meeting room space and the LED digital advertising sign at no cost. Bree was appointed to the Village of Park Forest Economic Development Advisory Group in 2013. In that capacity, she has reviewed and supported several incentives to bring new business to Park Forest, most recently Country Squire Foods. She also volunteers at the Midsummer Madness event to encourage shopping locally. According to one nominator, Bree encourages her customers to be all they can be. Another wrote that Bree encouraged her to finish her doctoral degree.



The EDAG Business Person of the Year Award is an annual award to recognize a Park Forest business owner for enhancing the quality of life for residents and other business owners through charitable work and service. Business owners are nominated by members of the public. Past winners of the award include **Janet Fiorenzo** of *Tower Cleaners* (2009), **Alan Franklin** of *Muzicnet Performing Arts Center* (2010), **James McDannel** of *Lifetime Automotive Repair* (2011), **Mike Jordan** of *State Farm Insurance* (2012) and **Earl & Alia Davis** of *Quality Classic Health & Fitness Center* (2013). The Business Person of the Year Award was established in 2009.

EDAG committee members are: Mike Jordan, Interim Chair; Andre Ahouissousi, Bree Breedlove, Sheila Friday, Phillip Perkins, P.C. Smith, and Zerex Veal. ■

Advertising Deadline is March 3

THINKING OF HOW to market to your Park Forest customer? Direct your advertising dollars to the upcoming **2015/2016 Park Forest Shopping & Services Guide**. This Guide is distributed to **8,500+** residences in the Village of Park Forest and used in a variety of Village marketing material. It's also published online with *active links* to your website!

Contact Monica DeLord for an application at (708) 283-5617 or mdelord@vopf.com. Submission deadline is March 3. Publication date is late June. ■

January 31 is Fast Approaching

HAVE YOU SUBMITTED your 2015 business registration application? If you haven't had a chance, now is the time! Please submit by *Friday, January 30* to avoid the 50% penalty fee.

You can access the application online at www.villageofparkforest.com on the *Business Registration* page under the *Grow: Business Development* tab.

Questions about the application or process, please contact Monica DeLord at mdelord@vopf.com or (708) 283-5617. ■

OPPORTUNITY ADVANCEMENT INNOVATION
IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Utilizing Tablets & Smart Phones in Your Small Business

PARK FOREST JANUARY BUSINESS BREAKFAST



Business partnerships are formed, appointments are made, transactions are conducted and data is organized and stored on our phones. This presentation will show you how to utilize tablets and smart phones to your company's advantage. Topics covered include setting up email, calendars, Square (payments), and cloud storage among others.

Bring Your Electronics with You and Get Started!

Date:

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21

Location:

Dining on the Green Banquet Hall
349 Main Street
DownTown Park Forest

Time:

8:00AM—9:30AM

What to Bring:

Your Tablets & Smart Phones

Cost: FREE

Complimentary Full Breakfast Included!
Your Associates are Welcome

Presentation:

Allen Babiarz
Project Coordinator
OAI, Inc.

Registration:

RSVP by Friday, January 16 via

*Online pf2015janbusiness.eventbrite.com

*Or by phone (708) 283-5617

*Or email mdelord@vopf.com

Park Forest
Live Grow Discover

October Breakfast: Small Business Energy Assessment

smart ideas™

**SMALL BUSINESS ENERGY SAVINGS
FULL-SERVICE OPTION**

Designed with your small business in mind, ComEd Smart Ideas for Your Business™ offers a full-service option that provides free energy assessments and instant incentives through our qualified Trade Allies.

Your small business could lower its electricity usage and costs by participating in the Small Business Energy Savings (SBES) program. The SBES Full-Service option offers free energy assessments and instant incentives to offset the costs of recommended energy efficiency projects. Our qualified SBES Trade Allies will assist you every step of the way to help you achieve energy savings for your business.

SAVING ENERGY IS AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3.

- 1 CHOOSE AN ENERGY EXPERT.**
One of our qualified SBES Trade Allies will walk you through the process. Trade Allies are contractors who have been trained on the processes and procedures of Smart Ideas™.
- 2 GET YOUR FREE ENERGY ASSESSMENT.**
The Trade Ally you choose will visit your business at your convenience and identify energy-saving opportunities that fit your needs. You will receive a report including recommendations for improvements and available instant incentives—to offset the efficient equipment and installation costs. Recommendations may include:
 - + FREE energy-saving compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)
 - + Efficient indoor/outdoor lighting
 - + HVAC upgrades
- 3 START SAVING TODAY—RECEIVE INSTANT INCENTIVES.**
It begins with you selecting your improvements. Your Trade Ally makes the process hassle-free by handling the invoice paperwork and installing your improvements. You only pay the balance after the incentives are applied.

Talk to one of our SBES Trade Allies to request a free energy assessment, review program details or check eligibility requirements.

TWINSUPPLIES, LTD.
Ray Hurley
400 Javis Blvd, Suite 114, Oak Brook, IL 60521
(708) 432-7651, (9) 430-537-0545
twinsupplies.ray@gmail.com, www.twinsupplies.net

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OVER FIFTY PEOPLE ATTENDED the October Business Breakfast to hear several speakers discuss how small business owners can save on their energy costs. The session was held on Friday, October 24 at Dining on the Green Banquet Hall located at 349 Main Street in DownTown Park Forest.

Sarah Coulter, LEED AP, Sustainability Coordinator for the Village of Park Forest, gave an overview of the progress on the Village's Sustainability Plan, sharing the success of several ongoing projects.

Rob Geltner, ComEd Business Representative, explained the programs and incentives available for businesses via ComEd. Go to comed.com/business-savings or ComEd.com/BizIncentives to obtain all the details.

Ray Hurley, Twin Supplies, an authorized state rebate/incentive program contractor, gave examples of how businesses saved money using ComEd's incentives, and shared examples of applying small changes resulting in big savings. Feel free to contact Ray at (708) 212-7651 for more information.

Lastly, **Bree Breedlove, State Farm,** Park Forest business owner, gave a well-received testimonial on how she applied numerous energy efficient improvements to her new location in Park Forest.

Don't miss our next quarterly business breakfast session on Wednesday, January 21 to be held at Dining on the Green Banquet Hall in DownTown Park Forest. Your invitation, with details, is on page 3. ■

Welcome New Businesses!

Cheap and Good Construction
Roofing Contractor
(708) 374-3483

Cloud 9 Confections
Baked Goods; Cupcakes, Cookies
& Cakes for Events
(708) 373-7800
www.cloud9confectionsonline.com



Country Squire Foods
120 Orchard Drive
(708) 506-3711
www.countrysquirefoods.com

Hough, Ray, Computer Services
Computer Repair Services
(708) 612-6050
www.rayhoughcomputerservices.com

LUX 223
Hall Rental
22315 Central Park
(773) 879-1196

Park Forest Podiatry
Practice Under New Ownership
Dr. Charlotte M. Covella
231 Main Street
(708) 748-3338

Reach A Village
Formerly FirstFruits International Ministries
254 Main Street
(708) 679-0237
www.reachavillage.org

S. Douglas Price
Life & Health Insurance
(708) 748-7311

Skelly, Rachel, L.
Board Certified Music Therapist
(708) 238-4481



On November 24, **Jeff Jaber**, owner of **Country Squire Foods, Inc.**, celebrated the grand opening of his second location at 120 Orchard Drive. Co-managers, Roger Gonzalez and Kenneth Nabb, along with family, friends and many supporters including Mayor Ostenburg, Village Trustees Mae Brandon, Gary Kopycinski, Georgia O'Neill, and JeRome Brown were present. Property owners, James Matanky, Robert Matanky and Terri Cox from *Matanky Realty Group* also participated in the presentation. Additionally, Calvin Holmes, *President of Chicago Community Loan Fund*, spoke accompanied by his staff Lyrceria Parks, Cigdem Cicekoglu, and Juan Calixto. (708) 506-3711

Sign up for their weekly specials at www.countrysquirefoods.com.

Park Forest Maker Space to Open Soon

THE VILLAGE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SOUTH SUBURBAN MAYORS and Managers Association (SSMMA) and the South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium (SMHEC), recently won a competition sponsored by the Small Business Administration (SBA) for a \$50,000 grant from the Growth Accelerator Fund. The SBA received 832 applications for this competition nationwide, and only awarded 50 grants, two in Illinois. The goal of the Growth Accelerator Fund is to assist business accelerators with their mission to support start-ups to grow, become commercially viable, and have real and sustained economic impact. The winners are focused in areas where there are gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Park Forest and its partners are using the grant to purchase the equipment and training to start a **Park Forest Maker Space** in the DownTown. Maker Magazine defines a "maker space" in the following way:

To describe them simply, makerspaces are community centers with tools. Makerspaces combine manufacturing equipment, community, and education for the purposes of enabling community members to design, prototype and create manufactured works that wouldn't be possible to create with the resources available to individuals working alone. These spaces can take the form of loosely-organized individuals sharing space and tools, for-profit companies, non-profit corporations, organizations affiliated with or hosted within schools, universities or libraries, and more. All are united in the purpose of providing access to equipment, community, and education, and all are unique in exactly how they are arranged to fit the purposes of the community they serve. Makerspaces represent the democratization of design, engineering, fabrication and education. They are a fairly new phenomenon, but are beginning to produce projects with significant national impacts.

The initial acquisition of equipment for the Park Forest Maker Space includes two 3D printers, a laser cutter, an electronics lab, and computers and design software. The goal of the Maker Space will be to enable users to create prototypes of new products that can then be marketed for larger production and sale. The Maker Space will also provide a program of courses and workshops that will educate the members about production, marketing, patents, and other key issues involved in the manufacturing process. At this time, the Maker Space is co-located with OAI, Inc., a new DownTown tenant at 214 Forest Boulevard, because staff of OAI will be managing the Maker Space until funds are available to hire staff that can be dedicated to the project.

If you have questions about the Park Forest Maker Space, or are interested in participating in the programs offered by the Maker Space, please contact Hildy Kingma, Director of Economic Development and Planning at (708) 283-5622 or hkingma@vopf.com. ■



Mayor Ostenburg and Hildy Kingma, Director of Economic Development & Planning, in Washington, D.C. to accept SBA's \$50,000 grant to start a Park Forest Maker Space.

Sam Montella Honored as EDAG Chair

SAM MONTELLA WAS HONORED at the December 1 Board meeting as he retired as the Economic Development Advisory Group Chair.

Sam Montella was appointed to EDAG in 1997 and served as Chairperson from 1999 until his retirement in September 2014. Sam worked tirelessly to promote the Village of Park Forest, its assets and amenities to recruit, retain and expand industrial and commercial enterprises and strengthen housing values. Sam guided Bank Calumet (now First Midwest Bank) to its Park Forest location on Main Street and he crafted and managed a loan program for homeowners in Eastgate to make substantial improvements to their homes. As Chairperson, Sam instituted an annual Business Person of the Year award. He represented the Village at national, regional and local trade shows. ■





VILLAGE OF PARK FOREST

Economic Development & Planning Department

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Visit us on the web!
www.villageofparkforest.com

Village of Park Forest

Economic Development Advisory Group

Mike Jordan
Interim Chair

Andre Ahouissousi
Bree Breedlove
Shelia Friday
Phillip Perkins
P.C. Smith
Zerex Veal

Trustee Georgia O'Neill
Board Liaison

Sandra Zoellner
Staff Liaison

EDAG is Looking for Members

Discusses Economic
Development Issues in
the Village.

Meets on the 2nd Wednesday
of the month at 7:00 p.m. in
Village Board Conference Rm

The Public is Welcome!

Want to be Included in the Bi-Weekly Business e-Blast?

Send Us Your Business
Promotional Notices, Events,
Launching New Website,
Celebrating an Anniversary, etc.

Our e-Blast Reaches Over 900

Send a jpg to
mdelord@vopf.com

Cost? It's FREE!

Tablets, Smart Phones and Your Small Business

PLAN TO ATTEND the next Business Breakfast on Wednesday, January 21 from 8-9:30 a.m. for an interactive demonstration on tablets and smart phones.

Allen Babiarz, *Project Coordinator from OAI Inc.*, will be our facilitator. This presentation will show you how to utilize tablets and smart phones to your company's advantage.

This **FREE** event will include a full complimentary breakfast starting at 8:00 a.m. at Dining on the Green located at 349 Main Street in DownTown Park Forest.



Please register by Friday, January 16 by using our Eventbrite webpage at <http://pf2015janbusiness.eventbrite.com> or contact Monica DeLord at (708) 283-5617 or mdelord@vopf.com. Space is limited, so register TODAY! ■

Planning Underway for July Promotion

5th Annual DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Date: 07/15/15
(3rd Wednesday in July)

Time: 5-7PM

Starts at Dining on the Green Banquet Hall
349 Main Street
Downtown, Park Forest

Stay for Main Street Nights Immediately Following Event

SAVE THE DATE!
Tons of Fun,
Food Vendors &
PRIZES!
FREE EVENT!

Details Coming Soon to:
www.villageofparkforest.com

MIDSUMMER MADNESS

LAST YEAR'S EVENT ATTRACTED over 180 Attendees, so we invite you to start preparing your advertising material for this popular event with Park Forest residents and surrounding communities.

This will be the fifth year that this event has been specifically targeted to the consumer to give your business the promotional advantage. We also encourage Park Forest business owners and business associates from surrounding communities to come out and join the fun by networking with the participating businesses.

The first one hundred attendees will receive a goodie bag loaded with YOUR coupons, business give-aways, and informational flyers highlighting the advantages of shopping in Park Forest.

Watch for the business notice going out the **first part of June** noting all the details of this event. Send an email to mdelord@vopf.com if you're interested in sponsorship or to reserve a space. ■