

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
& PLANNING
DEPARTMENT**



Business News

Volume 10, Issue 4

Winter/Spring 2018

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Mayor's Message

Business and education have a symbiotic relationship.

The most obvious component of that relationship is the way in which – from the first day that a child enters kindergarten until he or she walks across the stage to receive a college diploma – education prepares the individual for the workforce. Employers have the expectation that those whom they hire will bring with them fundamental skills that have been learned through twelve, sixteen, or more years of classroom engagement.

But employers also benefit from education. Management skills, investment strategies, business plan development, all are benefits that business owners and operators, and the management teams they have around them, have gained from their own educational experiences.

And, above and beyond the higher education that they offer, community colleges and universities, both in our region and elsewhere, provide assistance to many business operators through their small business development centers and similar programs.

Over the course of the last several months, something new has been added to the relationship between business and education, and it's happened right here in Park

Forest. It's a unique job mentoring program that a local business, ImageWorks, and Rich Township High School District 227 have forged. As a result of that program, a small group of recent high school graduates are employed at ImageWorks at the same

things the company produces.

Not long ago, Tom Becker, the company's owner and president, was at an event where some Rich East High School students were present. He was greatly impressed with them. At the same time, he was beginning to realize that a number of his employees were fast approaching retirement age. As he pondered where he might find new employees, he realized that few places train folks in ways that meet his needs. His conclusion? Train your own!

So today, several recent high school graduates are employed at ImageWorks learning virtually every aspect of the business. Some work in the production area, some in design, some in the business office, etc., and they all will have the opportunity during the time of their employment to move around and get a feel for every aspect of the business. In addition to providing them with a salary, ImageWorks also is paying their college tuition.

The ImageWorks story is so exciting that U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth recently visited Park Forest...

time that they're receiving tuition assistance to finance their college careers.

ImageWorks is a high-end printing business with international clients. The type of printing the company does produces truly unique products. Have you ever walked into a business and seen a large floor mat with the company's logo on it? ImageWorks does that. Ever receive an odd-shaped mailer, perhaps in the shape of a football or a tractor or an ice cream bar? ImageWorks does that. Ever take a look at a plastic bottle that seems to have the label itself imbedded in the composition material the bottle is made of? ImageWorks does that. And those are just a small handful of the



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Czupryn is 2017 Business Person of the Year

ED CZUPRYN OF THE PARK FOREST CURRENCY EXCHANGE is Park Forest's Business Person of the Year for 2017.

Czupryn was presented the Sam Montella Business Person of the Year Award this past Monday at Village Hall during Park Forest's Board of Trustees meeting. The annual award, sponsored by Park Forest's Economic Development Advisory Group (EDAG), considers nominations from the community in determining each year's winner.

The Park Forest Currency Exchange opened its doors in October of 1949 inside the Park Forest Plaza, making it the longest continuous business in the Village, having celebrated their 68th anniversary this month. Their current location on Orchard Drive is the third spot it has occupied, with the first two having been located inside the original Plaza. They have been at that location for 33 years moving there in 1984. Oddly enough, it was not the first business opened by Ed's family. In the founding days of the Park Forest Plaza, Ed's maternal grandfather opened both the Park Forest Plaza Barber Shop and the Park Forest Plaza Beauty Shop. Shortly after that, Ed's father opened the Park Forest Currency Exchange. All three businesses were fixtures in the Plaza for decades.

For the last five years, the Park Forest Currency Exchange has purchased 400 of the *Kits* from Back2School and personally distributed them to Park Forest Area School Districts. This last August, Ed and Monica, his wife, along with their daughter, Jessica, presented 100 Kits to Park Forest School District #163.

The Currency Exchange provides a much needed service to the Village's residents allowing them to pay their phone, gas, electric and other utility bills. Residents are able to apply for and renew license plates, update vehicle titles, cash payroll and personal checks, wire transfer funds, have items notarized and obtain money orders to name just a few of their provided services. It further provides a safe place for the distribution and cashing of monthly state assistance checks for Park Forest residents, as checks are delivered directly to the Currency Exchange. Each month, the Park Forest Currency Exchange serves over a 1,000 Park Forest residents, who walk through their doors at 98 S. Orchard.

You can see the complete presentation on our website at www.villageofparkforest.com.

Past recipients of the Sam Montella Business Person of the Year award are: Janet Fiorenzo, *Tower Cleaners*; Alan Franklin, *Muzicnet Performing Arts Center*; Jim McDannel, *Lifetime Automotive Repair*; Mike Jordan, *State Farm Insurance*; Earl and Alia Davis, *Quality Classic Health and Fitness Center*; Bree Breedlove, *State Farm Insurance*, Yvette Jones, *Real Estate Broker*, and Patricia Moore, *Patricia Moore Studio*.

The Economic Development Advisory Group includes Phillip Perkins, Chair; Bree Breedlove, Vice Chair; Andre Ahouissoussi, Sheila Friday, Mike Jordan, Maurae Gilbert McCants, Bettie McReynolds and Zerex Veal. The Trustee Liaison is Mae Brandon and Sandra Zoellner is staff liaison. ■



Left to right: Mike Jordan, EDAG Member, Sandra Zoellner, Staff Liaison, Phil Perkins, EDAG Chair, Bree Breedlove, EDAG Vice Chair, Ed & Monica Czupryn, Sherri, Park Forest Currency Exchange employee, and Patti & Cliff Butz, two of the three nominators.



Great Connections Made at Southland Networking Mix



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL NETWORKING mix took place on December 6 at Dining on the Green Banquet Hall in DownTown Park Forest.

Watch for our next business breakfast to be held in February/March. Our breakfast speakers cover topics of interest to the small business owner and are always free of charge. Our next networking mix will be scheduled in April/May. Hope to see you there! ■

Melissa Farmer-Hill, *Contemporary Living With Farmer & Hill*, was the lucky winner of the \$50 VISA Card for bringing the most guests.



Park Forest Community Oscar Awards



The Village of Park Forest presents, "2018 Community Oscars". Park Forest would like to take the time to recognize and celebrate its awesome constituents. To do so we need your help. Consider nominating someone, today. You may not nominate yourself. We have 3 easy ways you can nominate someone, see below.

Grab a nomination form from the following:

- 1) **Pick up at the Village** (On the wall in the Lobby),
- 2) **Request by E-mail:** esterling@vopf.com or
- 3) **Submit On-line:** villageofparkforest/oscar.com.

Questions? Call, 708.283.5621.

Nominate Someone Today!

(Categories listed on the back)

Nomination Deadline: Monday, January 12.

Will this be YOU?



CATEGORY (Please select one.)

- Community Advocate Award
- Pioneer Award
- Volunteer Extraordinaire Award
- Excellence in Education Award
- Outstanding Student Award
- Government Award
- Beyond the Call of Duty Award
- Making a Difference Award
- Laugh Out Loud Award
- Cultural Arts Award
- Village Favorite Award
- Most Active Church Award
- Best Customer Service Award
- Timeless Artist Award
- Local Historian Award
- Spoken Word Award
- Stellar Voice Award
- People's Choice Award
- Community ESPY Award (Sports)

How to submit a nomination:

Please send completed nomination form/s to: Evelyn Sterling

- 1) **Drop off at the Village** (2nd fl., 1st door to the right); **2) Mail:** Village of Park Forest, 350 Victory Drive, Park Forest, IL 60466; **3) Fax:** 708.748.4355; **4) E-mail:** esterling@vopf.com; or **5) On-line:** villageofparkforest/oscar.com.

Nomination Deadline: Monday, January

12. **Questions?** Call, 708.283.5621.

Description of Nomination Categories:

Community Advocate Award

A Park Forest business that reaches out to students within the community by creating learning opportunities and investing in their higher education through scholarships.

Pioneer Award

Resident who has lived and served actively in Park Forest for 20 or more years.

Volunteer Extraordinaire Award

A Park Forest volunteer who has demonstrated outstanding civic leadership.

Excellence in Education Award

A Park Forest teacher who provides innovative teaching techniques and empowerment through education.

Outstanding Student Award

A Park Forest student who demonstrates an eagerness to learn and contributes to their school and community.

Government Award

An elected civic leader of Park Forest who has made outstanding contributions to local government.

Beyond the Call of Duty Award

A Firefighter or Police Officer who serves Park Forest beyond what their title requires.

Making a Difference Award

A community member who has implemented an idea or created a program that has made an impact in Park Forest.

Laugh Out Loud Award

A comical person known to make the people of Park Forest laugh.

Cultural Arts Award

Group that integrates both art and culture to enrich the community of Park Forest.

Village Favorite Award

Village of Park Forest employee who demonstrates friendliness and excellence in customer service.

Most Active Church Award

An active church in Park Forest that recognizes the need of the community and selflessly serves.

Best Customer Service Award

A business in Park Forest that puts customers first and consistently provides top notch service.

Timeless Artist Award

A Park Forest artist who cultivates their creativity into profound art through dance, and instrumental.

Local Historian Award

A member of the community who demonstrates a passion for Park Forest History and enthusiasm to inform others of all things Park Forest.

Spoken Word Award

A Park Forest poet who uses their words to provide meaningful and thought provoking messages.

Stellar Voice Award

A Park Forest resident who is gifted with a beautiful singing voice.

People's Choice Award

This category includes anything that does not fall under any of the other categories that you feel is worthy of recognition.

Community ESPY Award (Sports)

A Park Forest resident who has shown excellence in their sports performance.

Latest Economic Development News

80 North Street...October 18, 2017 culminated 30 months of negotiations when the Village of Park Forest sold 80 North Street to ForeBio Properties, LLC. This property sits on about 7.5 acres, and includes an approximately 16,300 sf two-story office building with a basement and 107,100 square feet warehouse and production plant. Twice in the past the property was under contract, but both deals ended when affordable financing was not achieved by either buyer. In the meantime, the Village completed Phase I and Phase II Environmental Studies, worked to prevent further vandalism of the property, and when needed, secured the property with an alarm system, board up of windows and doors, etc. The State Legislature enacted the Keystone Property Tax Act which set the real estate property taxes at land value for 12 years.

ForeBio Properties, LLC. is planning to invest a total of \$8,500,000 over the first three years to purchase and refurbish the property. ForeBio Nutrition Inc. will establish a food and nutritional products manufacturing business of national and international significance. The plant will employ between 30-40 employees. ForeBio Properties, LLC plans to rehabilitate the office building to lease to additional businesses.

22255 Central Park Avenue...As a last resort, on September 2015, the Village Board gave staff the authority to pursue 22255 Central Park Avenue by Cook County No Cash Bid (tax scavenger process). Staff had attempted to negotiate a sale between Chicago Real Estate Leaders, LLC (CREL) and an interested buyer, but the owner (CREL) avoided paying property taxes and maintaining the property for nearly four years. As a result, the Tax Deed was issued in favor of the Village on November 3, 2017. Staff is working with the business owners of Subway, Magic Hands Hair Braiding, Lavish Kutz Barber Shop and Lux 223 Banquet Facility to evaluate the condition of the property, determine the cost of repairs, and set a price to sell the property. ■ **Sandra Zoellner, Assistant Director of Economic Development & Planning**

Welcome New Businesses!

Global Consultants, Corp
Logistics Consulting
288 Main Street
(708) 747-2557

Ken's Liquor, Inc.
2560 Western Avenue
(708) 441-2040

Princess Palace
Children Party Rental Location
251 Cunningham Drive
(773) 710-7278

Rosie Mae Home Care, LLC
Non Medical Home Care Agency
276 Main Street
(708) 980-1018
rosiemaehomecare.com

Southland Human Services Leadership Council
Assist Human Serv Agency
338 Forest Boulevard
(708) 248-7910

Vintrendi Wine Company
Wine Blender
290 Victory Drive
(708) 433-9463
vintrendiwines.com

Word Worship Center, The
Place of Worship
375 Oswego
(708) 278-5344



Pictured left to right: Employee, Sonny Soni, manager, Kenny Soni, owner, Trustee Vanderbilt, Mayor Ostenburg, Tom Mick, Village Manager, Trustee Settles, Trustee O'Neill, Trustee Graham, and Mrs. Soni. All pictured during the grand opening ceremony that was held on November 6 at **Ken's Liquor** located at 2560 Western Avenue. (708) 441-2040



Above: Wine samples were distributed during the **Vintrendi Wine Company** grand opening.



Left: Rick Nesbitt, owner of Vintrendi Wine Company, posing during ribbon cutting on October 21 with Mayor Ostenburg, Trustee Vanderbilt, and many friends and relatives present to celebrate the day. Vintrendi Wine Company is located at 290 Victory Drive. (708) 433-9463 vintrendiwinecompany.com

Shop Local First!



VILLAGE OF PARK FOREST

Economic Development & Planning Department

350 Victory Drive
Park Forest, IL 60466

Phone: 708.283.5617
Fax: 708.748.4355

Visit us on the web!
www.villageofparkforest.com

Village of Park Forest

Economic Development Advisory Group

Phillip Perkins
Chair

Bree Breedlove
Vice Chair

Andre Ahouissoussi
Shelia Friday
Mike Jordan
Maurae Gilbert McCants
Bettie McReynolds
Zerex Veal

Trustee Mae Brandon
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 6:00 p.m. in
Village Board Conference Rm

The Public is Welcome!

December 31st is the deadline...

to submit your 2018 Business
Registration application.
Invoices were mailed the
second week in November.

Questions, contact Monica
DeLord at (708) 283-5617
or mdelord@vopf.com

October Breakfast Was All About the Inbox

OUR THIRD OF FOUR business breakfasts this year was conducted on October 4 at Dining on the Green Banquet Hall located at 349 Main Street in DownTown Park Forest. **Kathy Hays** from the *Hays Digital Group* gave an insightful presentation on email marketing.

Ms. Hays is a digital marketing specialist and consultant for Hays Digital Group as well as a Certified Solutions Provider for Constant Contact.

Her presentation included general guidelines of good email marketing. She provided examples of successful marketing and revealed how to control the power of the inbox. She also expounded on its reliability and how to make it work with social media.

Our second speaker was **Priscilla Cordero**, Associate Director of the *Women's Business Development Center* located on Governors State University campus. She shared information about the expanded services now available to the small business owner. Entrepreneurs and small business owners who are interested in speaking with her, at no charge, should call the WBDC at (312) 853-3477 x 100 to schedule an appointment.



Kathy Hays, Hays Digital Group, during her October presentation in Park Forest.

Feel free to contact Kathy Hays at khays@haysdigitalgroup.net, or Priscilla Cordero at pcordero@wbdc.org and tell them you heard about their services through this Park Forest business newsletter. ■

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MAYOR

The ImageWorks story is so exciting that U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth recently visited Park Forest to hear all about it from Becker and Mark Kramer, former principal at Rich East High School who now is in charge of career training for District 227. Senator Duckworth has prepared federal legislation that will provide funding for programs across the country that are similar, and Congresswoman Robin Kelly is collaborating with her on that.

In addition, we recently heard from another local business that has an interest possibly doing something akin to what's happening at ImageWorks. We're currently exploring the feasibility of that. If your business also might be interested in this concept, please contact the Village Economic Development staff. ■

Mayor John A. Ostenburg