

SWEDA NEWS

Creating a Community Where People Want to Live and Work!

3rd Quarter ~ 2008

In This Issue

- Bonnie Plant purchases Carolina Greenhouse
 - Jobs coming to County
 - KCTCS Springfield Campus, well on its way
 - Retention Tours, Five Times the Success
 - Small Business Survival in a Slowing Economy
 - CATS Tests show Washington County School District Highly Ranked
 - Russian Delegates visit Springfield/Washington County
 - Local Business to get Material from Regional Recycling Center
 - Bluegrass Dairy & Food wins First Place in Ky. State Fair's Cheese Contest
 - Director's Report
-

Plant operation, jobs coming to county

By Jeff Moreland
Editor/General Manager
The Springfield Sun

The local economy will soon get a boost as some new jobs take root in Springfield. Bonnie Plants, a company providing vegetables, herbs, flowers and other gardening items to home and department stores such as Home Depot, Lowe's, Wal-Mart and K-Mart, has announced it will open a new Springfield growing and distribution location.



Bonnie Plants will make their local home in the former Carolina Greenhouse property on KY 55 across from Toyotomi Automotive. The agriculture company expects to bring about a dozen full-time jobs to Springfield, as well as 30 to 35 seasonal jobs, according to Joey Padgett, who will serve as manager of the location.

"We will put the greenhouses up and expect to start production in December or January," Padgett said. "It's a real seasonal business, but when we do work, we work seven days a week. It's a unique business."

The Springfield location will add approximately 100,000 square feet of greenhouse space, as well as making use of a 20,000 square foot building already on the property, according to Padgett. He added that the facility will ship to more than 350 stores in central Kentucky, southern Indiana and

southern Ohio. By volume, the Springfield location will be among the top 10 among the Bonnie Plant growing stations.

Bonnie Plants was started in 1918 by Livingston and Bonnie Paulk in Bullock County, Ala. The company was later sold to the Alabama Farmers' Cooperative in 1975, and now does business in 49 U.S. states and Canada.

Padgett said his company typically provides products to businesses in metropolitan areas such as Nashville, Cincinnati and other cities, but they consider themselves a small-town company.

"Our roots are in a small town, and that's kind of where we got our start," he said. "We feel more appreciated by being in a small community."

Bonnie Plants has 60 farms across the country, and Padgett said 50 of those are in small, rural communities similar to Springfield.

Springfield-Washington County Economic Development Authority Executive Director Hal B. Goode stated, "This is an exciting announcement of Bonnie Plant Farm coming to Springfield. The jobs will be a great addition and our community which has a solid base of agriculture and Bonnie Plant's slogan of "Going Greener for You" is a perfect fit in Springfield and Washington County. I want to commend Judge John Settles and the Fiscal Court, Mayor John W. Cecconi and the City Council, and the SWEDA Board for their support in this team effort of continuing growth through economic development in our community.

For more information on Bonnie Plants, including employment information, visit www.bonnieplants.com on the Internet.

KCTCS Springfield Campus showing growth

Photo By: Shorty Lassiter
"The Springfield Sun"



SWEDA Executive Director Hal B. Goode and Kentucky Community & Technical College project observer Billy Milby met recently at the construction site of Washington County's new technical facility. After months of planning, the facility is finally showing signs of growth.

Director Goode credits much of the progress toward excellent leadership by State Senator Dan Kelly, Judge John Settles and fiscal court, Mayor John Cecconi and the city council and the Springfield-Washington County board of directors. Morel Construction from Louisville, KY is the general contractor and Ross Tarrant Architects

of Lexington is the project architect. Completion is expected by the fall of 2009.

Retention Tours, five times the success



Washington County Extension Office was used to host a retention dinner honoring employees and management from Alltech, All-Weather Insulation, Barber Cabinet, Concept Packaging, Boone Sheet Metal, IMI, Micro-Weld Technologies, Springfield Custom Cabinets, Russell Brothers, The Springfield Sun and Young Tool & Machine

For the 5th consecutive year, the Springfield-Washington County Economic Development Authority wrapped up another successful year of honoring over 1000 of Washington County's industrial employees and management. The industries that were recognized this year included Alltech, Akebono, All-Weather Insulation (Johnson Products), Barber Cabinet, Concept Packaging, Boone Sheet Metal, IMI, Micro-

Weld Technologies, LB Manufacturing, INOAC, Springfield Custom Cabinets, NAPCO, Russell Brothers, Smith Cabinetcraft, The Springfield Sun, Toyotomi America and Young Tool & Machine.

Again, without our generous sponsors, none of this would be possible. SWEDA would like to thank U. S. Bank, Springfield State Bank, Mattingly, Simms, Robinson & McCain, KY Wimax Internet & Satellite, BB&T Bank, Sell with Hale Realty & Auction, McElroy, Wharton & Boldrick Insurance & Real Estate, Salt River Electric, Spring View Hospital, SK Realty, Central Kentucky Optometric Associates, Dr. John Isaacs, D.O.E., Kentucky Supply-Springfield Ace, Parkview IGA, Something Blu Photography, St. Catharine College, Springfield Inn, Ruggles Sign Co., Dr. Ben Smith, Commonwealth Broadcasting 100.9 & 102.7, Snappy Tomato and Mordecai's Restaurant for their dedication and commitment to Springfield/Washington County.

Finally, how can we not mention the individual that coordinates the tours each year? Ms. Mollie Smith. She is now a senior at the University of Kentucky majoring in Elementary Education and maybe if SWEDA is lucky enough, we can lure her back for one more year. Mollie's organizational skills and dedication to this community have been extremely valuable in the success of these tours and SWEDA would like to thank Mollie for another tremendous year.



Over 75 people attended the 2008 Manager's Breakfast at Mordecai's Restaurant

Small Business Survival in a Slowing Economy

Guest Column by:
Patricia Krausman
UK SBDC

Funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of SBA.



Almost daily, news reports have shocking new figures about the number of foreclosures, the price at the pumps or the increase in unemployment rates. The state of the economy is a harsh reality that is hitting the pocketbooks of men, women and families across the country. Men and women are evaluating their budgets and determining where to make cuts and where to reallocate funds. Consumer spending during an economic downturn most certainly impacts small businesses and the choices they are making.

Business owners fear customer cuts in spending and are being forced to raise prices to compensate for the increase in their expenses. Some companies are considering layoffs, while others are considering closing their doors. These are just a few of the many challenges and realities that businesses may face during this time of economic turmoil. However, with proper planning and appropriate utilization of resources small business owners have the ability to weather the storm.

It is vitally important for small businesses to monitor cash flow and debt service during a slow economy. Many times small businesses overlook monitoring accounts receivable and fall behind in collecting payments. Problems should be addressed immediately. The more lead-time available in solving the problem often equals more options available in fixing the problem.

Small business owners need to develop a contingency plan for addressing supplier changes. It's essential to remember that suppliers are facing their own challenges and may make decisions that will impact their client base. Therefore, a backup plan can minimize disruptions if the supplier experiences difficulties. Additionally, this may be a good time to explore different vendors and do a price comparison to insure the business is receiving the best value for its money.

Small business owners should stay in constant contact with their customer base. Contact can be made inexpensively and quickly by sending courtesy emails and faxes or by calling customers. Customers may be reluctant to spend their money and will need reassuring from the businesses which can be made through faxes, emails or phone calls. Business owners should also take notice of their customers' spending habits and look for opportunities to position the business to meet the customers' needs.

Small businesses that are forced to layoff employees need to develop a strategy to handle the layoffs. Owners must communicate openly with their employees and manage their perceptions as the layoffs occur. Losing a job can be completely debilitating to a person; therefore, business owners need to be sensitive of employees, but must also protect the business and its reputation.

A slow economy is a good chance for small businesses to look for opportunities and take advantage of reduced costs where available. For example, business owners may see the needs of its customer base shifting or an opportunity to grow a product line or introduce a new service. After conducting research and examining finances, this may be the time to expand the business and benefit from low prices.

Small business owners are encouraged to reach out to the UK Small Business Development Center in Elizabethtown for assistance during this economic hardship. The sole purpose of the SBDC is to help the small business community to thrive. The SBDC has a long list of resources, experienced management consultants and numerous educational workshops ready to help any small business owner needing assistance. The UK Small Business Development Center can be contacted by calling 270-765-6737.

CATS Tests show Washington County School District Highly Ranked

By Special to The Springfield Sun

The Washington County School District has been recognized by the Kentucky Department of education as an "exemplary growth district" following the recent release of scores from the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS).



Only 64 of Kentucky's 175 school districts have received this recognition. All schools in the district are progressing or meeting their goals, and the schools have also met the dropout and novice reduction goals set by the state. As a district, they rank fifth out of 18 districts in this region.

Washington County Elementary has become the first school in the county to reach the goal of an academic index score of 100 or above by 2014. An academic index of 102.9 is not the only thing the school has to celebrate. The social studies scores at WCES rank 12th out of 746 elementary schools in the state with a score of 119.3.

North Washington Elementary School also performed well. The school's total academic index has risen from 83.6 to 91.6 since last year. The science score at NWES was 104 and was the highest in the district. School-wide, in grades 1-8, NWES has reduced its novice scores from over the past five years from 29 percent to just 7 percent.

Fredericktown's elementary scores declined, but the middle school students increased their scores in four of five subjects tested. North Washington's middle school scores increased in all areas that were assessed. The total academic index increased from 83.2 to 91.5. Both their portfolio writing scores and their practical living/vocational scores were above 100.

Washington County Middle School's total academic index declined slightly from 80.9 to 79.6 from 2007. However, math scores have consistently increased over the past years from 56.7 in 2005 to 79.3 in 2008.

Washington County High School's scores increased slightly over the past year. The school ranks 44th of 175 districts state-wide. In the region the high school's scores rank 4th of the 18 high schools. There is only a one-point difference between their score and the number one high school in the region. The high school was also one of the 33 percent of high schools in the state that met all of its No Child Left Behind goals. The school had a significant increase in On-Demand Writing scores (58.9 to 82.5), which is a 23.5 point increase from last year.

Washington County Schools are ready to take the next steps to reach the goal of proficiency for all students by 2014. The district plans to focus on working together to improve student achievement, to continue professional development on Kagan structures, to continue efforts to help struggling readers and to have interventions in place to ensure student mastery of core content.

Russian Delegates visit Springfield/Washington County



Ten Russian delegates visited Springfield/Washington County as part of the USAID's Community Connections program. The group was welcomed to Springfield/Washington County by Mayor John W. Cecconi, City Administrator Laurie Smith, SWEDA Director Hal B. Goode, Springfield Main Street Director Nell Haydon, Chamber of Commerce Executive Secretary Dawn Pettus, Assistant City Project Coordinator Kathy Elliott and Senator Dan Kelly. The delegates and interpreters met at the Opera House and began the day with a power point presentation and Q and A session before having lunch at Mordecai's Restaurant. The group then traveled to St. Catharine

College where they were greeted by President Bill Huston. In the afternoon, the delegates were joined by Judge Executive John Settles, Nell Haydon, Kathy Elliott and three of our youngest Ambassadors Steven Carney, Benji Gaona and McKenna Raybourne as they wrapped up the day with a tour of our historic courthouse, P.V.A. office and charming downtown.

The Russians will be staying in Kentucky and Southern Indiana for 22 days and will be meeting with a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations to discuss public oversight and citizen involvement in governance. The Community Connections program offers home-stay based practical training opportunities in the U. S. for entrepreneurs, local government officials, legal professionals, non-governmental organizational leaders and other professionals from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. It is administered in the local area by the World Affairs Council of Kentucky/Southern Indiana with funding by the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia at USAID.

Local Business to get Material from Regional Recycling Center

By Jeff Moreland
Editor/General Manager
The Springfield Sun

(L to R) Russell Buckman, warehouse manager and Robert Pace, plant manager

That was the idea behind the recent decision of All-Weather Insulation/Johnson Products of Bloomfield Road in Springfield, to purchase newsprint, magazines, books and slicks from the Washington County Regional Recycling Center. "All-Weather approached us, and they asked us if they could buy our newsprint rather than buying it from our broker," said George Ann Palmer, Washington County solid waste coordinator. "We think it's a very good idea that we can help a local business by recycling."



All-Weather manufactures cellulose insulation and hydro seeding mulch from recycled paper products, and has been in business since 1977. The company employs 12 full-time workers. Robert Pace, plant manager for All-Weather, said his company uses about 150,000 to 200,000 pounds of paper per day, and he is glad to be able to purchase some of the materials they will need locally, although the amount produced at the regional recycling center will provide less than a day's worth of paper for All-Weather. According to recycling center records, 142,124 pounds of paper have been collected from July 2007 through June of 2008.

"We will still have to go outside and purchase paper from other states, but everything helps out," Pace said. "This just benefits everybody. Instead of leaving the county, these materials stay here. This is a very small amount of what we actually use, but every little bit helps, and we hope this grows."

All-Weather will pay the same average price that the county has received at the recycling center over the past year, which is 4 cents per pound for newsprint and 1 cent per pound for magazines and slicks.

"We're trying to continue to form partnerships, and I think this is a great opportunity for all phases of local government to show another combination and let people see we are working together," said Hal Goode, a magistrate with Washington County Fiscal Court and also executive director of Springfield-Washington County Economic Development Authority. "These guys are eager to do business in Washington County, and also to utilize local recyclable materials to go right back into society."

Washington County Judge-Executive John Settles said the sale of such materials to a local customer only makes good sense. "This is a very small amount (of paper) for them, but we appreciate them wanting to partner with us on this," Settles said. "It's going to keep us from having to ship it out, and theoretically, it could come back here to them anyway."

~~~~~

## **Bluegrass Dairy hits Finish Line "First" in Kentucky State Fair's Cheese Contest**

Special to The Springfield Sun

Photo courtesy of Bluegrass Dairy

*Pictured (left to right) with medals for the Wisconsin and Kentucky cheese competitions: Billy Joe Williams, President of Bluegrass Dairy & Food; Rabbi Yosef Capland, the company's full-time OU rabbinic field representative (who personally supervised and set the award-winning cheeses); Ricky Gulley, Plant Manager and Director of Cheese Department.*

In what may be considered the Kentucky Derby of cheese competitions, OU kosher-certified cheese manufactured by Bluegrass Dairy & Food/Glasgow Division of Glasgow and Springfield, recently won first place gold in all three classes at the Kentucky State Fair for its Natural Cheddar (Wilderness Trails brand) and



its Natural Gouda (Bluegrass Dairy & Food brand). To prove that Bluegrass thrives far from its old Kentucky home, its Colby (Bluegrass Dairy & Food brand) took third place at the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association 2008 World Cheese Championship.

"Working with Bluegrass Dairy & Food is always exciting," remarked Rabbi Andrew Gordimer, OU Rabbinic Coordinator (account executive) for Bluegrass. "The company's full-time OU coverage enables it to produce almost anything as kosher, and all types of new cheeses and various projects are developed and introduced on a constant basis. The flexibility of Bluegrass' infrastructure and staff is amazing, and the company's commitment to break ground and establish top-quality product in so many areas, while maintaining the highest of kosher standards, has made it a rising and shining star in the kosher and general food industries."

---

## Director's Report

"Wall Street to Main Street" is a comment we seem to hear daily. Springfield and Washington County has always stood strong when economic times seem tough. With expansions at Toyotomi and the new addition of Bonnie Plant in the vacant Carolina Greenhouse, our community continues to show the world we are ready for continued growth. Our marketing of the Akebono Building the Springfield-Washington County Commerce Center continued as I traveled to the International Manufacturers Trade Show in Chicago with E-ON electric where we met with manufacturers from throughout the world.

Thank you for taking a moment to read our newsletter. If our office can help you in any fashion, please contact me.

Best regards,

Hal B. Goode  
SWEDA Executive Director

---

### Contact Information:

Springfield-Washington Co. Economic Development Authority

124 West Main Street

Springfield, KY 40069

Phone: 859-336-0052

800-430-5505

Fax: 859-336-9410

hal@sweda.org <mailto:hal@sweda.org>

Visit us at: [www.sweda.org](http://www.sweda.org)