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NOVEMBER 2022

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Quiet quitter

Is that who you want to be?

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Competitive advantage

Building off the foundation

Meet a Local Leader

Andrew Mozena

BE ONE WELLNESS

BRINGS A

holistic approach

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NOVEMBER 2022
Volume 31, Issue 3

ON THE COVER



Travis Olson turned to massage for therapy, then developed a business from it.

Photo by Stephen Gassman

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ON THE WEB

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For the Twitter feed, go to [@biztimes.dbq](https://twitter.com/biztimes.dbq)

Therapy and workers

The headline might not look completely accurate, but for this edition, it fits.

We have a pair of informational features. First up, is Be One Wellness, a Dubuque-based business owned by Travis Olson.

He offers a variety of health options, ranging from massage to cryotherapy to saunas to kickboxing.

Read more on page 5.

Next up is a look at one of the



Gary Dura

Greater Dubuque Development Corp. programs, Dubuque Works.

It looks at a plethora of data and works with

business partners to create workforce solutions that are custom to our area.

Read about it on page 10.

Email me at gary.dura@thmedia.com.

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Be One Wellness brings holistic approach to Dubuque

Stephen Gassman
Owner Travis Olson at Be
One Wellness in Dubuque.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

BY KARI WILLIAMS

Travis Olson was never one to embrace massage therapy. But the owner of Be One Wellness found himself turning to the practice when nagging sports injuries, including a fractured lower back, wouldn't let up.

"It was the only thing after doing other stuff that felt really, really good," said Olson, who began receiving massages around 2015.

He's among the more than 50% of individuals who "got their last massage for health and wellness reasons," according to the American Massage Therapy Association's 2021 community survey.

When Olson turned 30, he came across a podcast that "just clicked" and led him to slowly transition into a healthier lifestyle, of which kick boxing became a key part.

Continued on page 7



Exterior of Be One Wellness on Central Avenue in Dubuque.

Continued from page 6

At the time he found massage, he had been self-employed with his father for about 20 years and was looking for a career he was more interested in. So he went for it, completing a massage therapy program in 2020 with Body Wisdom in Des Moines.

Though Olson lives in Guttenberg, Iowa, he knew the man selling what would become the site of Be One Wellness in downtown Dubuque. Aside from the brick-and-mortar building, Olson said population was “the big thing” that brought his business to Dubuque.

“I was also bringing cryotherapy ... A lot of things kind of fell in line,” he said, noting the treatment in which an individual sits in a near-freezing tank for three to five minutes to alleviate muscle pain and other ailments.

After securing the building, he said, they remodeled the inside, giving Olson the space to offer massage, cryotherapy, personal training, cupping, infrared saunas and kickboxing.

Olson said he offers so many services because of his belief in a “more holistic approach.”

“I believe in working out, diet(ing) for lifestyle and trying to live a healthier lifestyle,” he said. “Massage ties in with that.”

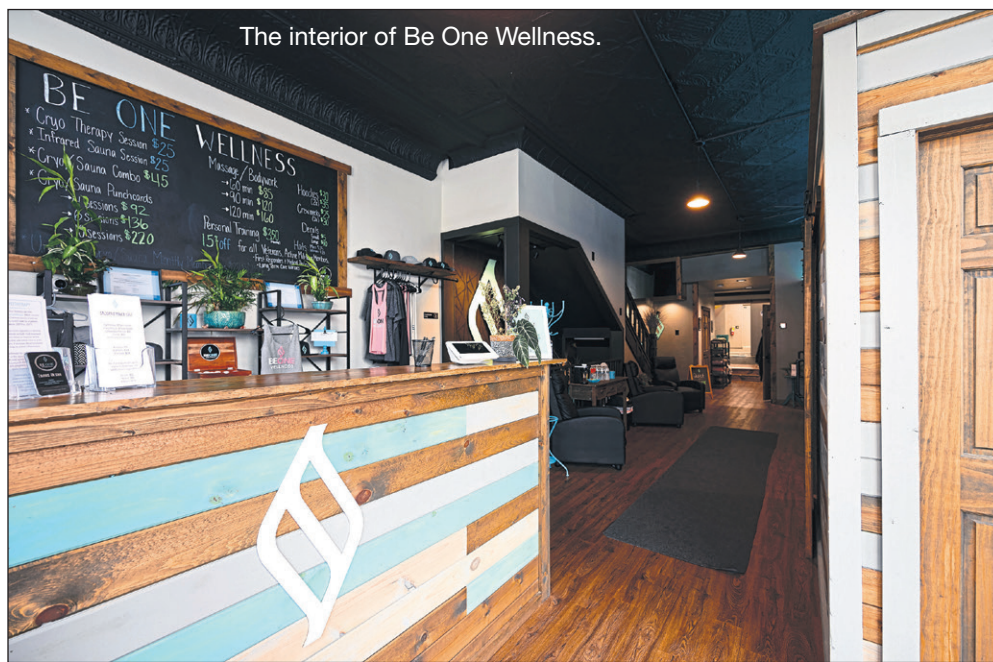
The most popular services at Be One are massage. Olson provides several types, including deep tissue, Swedish, myofascial and pregnancy.

Pain relief/management and stress reduction are the top two reasons that people seek out massage therapy, the AMTA community

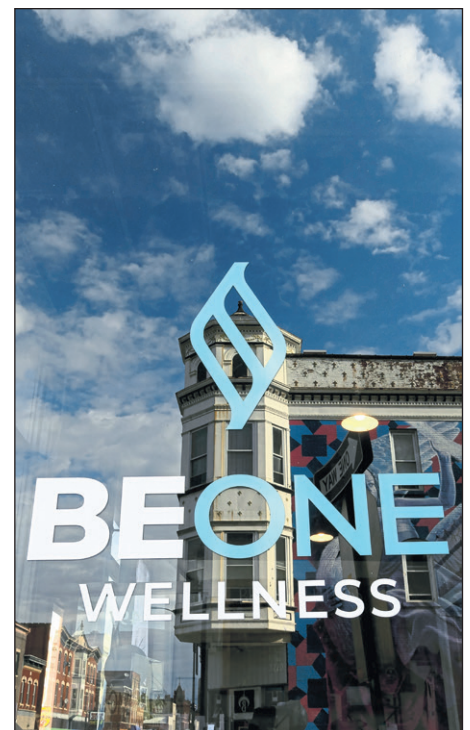
Continued on page 8



Trainer Stacy McDermott works with Kyle McMan in the weight room.



The interior of Be One Wellness.



The window sign of Be One Wellness.

8 Biz Profile

bizTimes.biz, Dubuque, Iowa, November 2022

Continued from page 7

survey found.

Personal training is available on a limited basis and maxes out at 14 people per week.

"I do a lot of different stuff here, but I'm seeing a very positive turnout with all that," Olson said. "The cryo especially."

Women, according to Olson, are the "most nervous" to get in the cryo tank beforehand, but once inside, it's the men who are asking

how much time is left.

"Women have higher pain tolerances, and I don't think they realize it 'til they get in there," Olson said.

Olson said he believes Be One is the only business in the Dubuque area that offers cryotherapy. He also has a "pretty decent return rate" among customers.

What makes Be One Wellness stand out, according to Olson, is the vibe it gives off at its location on Central Avenue.

"When (clients) walk in here, they say they

forget where they're at," Olson said.

Olson said he loves working with new clients – for example, a farmer whose wife booked the massage for him – and getting across to them the benefits of massage.

"(He) gets out of here and he's like, '(Wow) I can move,'" Olson said. "It's really cool getting across and getting those kind of people."

For more information, or to book an appointment, visit be-one-wellness.myshopify.com/.



JESSICA REILLY

A therapy room at Be One Wellness.



A cryotherapy room at Be One Wellness.

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Dubuque Works

innovative workforce development programs

BY JILL CARLSON

Finding and retaining skilled employees is an ongoing challenge across the U.S.

In the tri-state area the Greater Dubuque Development Corp. offers some innovative workforce development programs to assist businesses find skilled workers and for workers to gain the skills needed for success.

The GDDC is a nonprofit formed for the purpose of retaining and creating quality jobs and attracting new investment in the community. The GDDC team of economic development professionals have three main goals: business development, workforce solutions and community development to help shape Dubuque's future.

Continued on page 11



Metro Creative

DUBUQUE WORKS FOCUS AREAS FOR 2022-2027

Connect students, under and unemployed workers and disengaged populations to career exploration, education and training opportunities that will position them to pursue and attain high-demand jobs in our market.

Recruit talent both close to home and from across the country, including on our own regional college campuses, through effective outreach and regional promotion.

Create through education the technical, academic and soft skills needed of our workforce now and into the future through collaborations with institutions of higher education, non-profits, and other federal, state and local resources.

Retain skilled workforce and top talent in the Greater Dubuque region through integrated partnerships with business, non-profits, housing, workforce, health, recreation, and arts and culture communities.

Source: Greater Dubuque Development Corp.

Continued from page 10



Nicolas
Hockenberry

"In November 2008, the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation was presented with the task of analyzing and revitalizing Dubuque's current workforce development strategy," said Nicolas Hockenberry, director of Workforce Programming.

"After several meetings with key workforce development leaders within the community, the concept of 'Dubuque Works' emerged. The group took a close look at existing workforce programs and identified strengths, weaknesses, duplication of services and opportunities for collaboration," Hockenberry added.

Dubuque Works efforts and activities are driven by a five-year strategic plan. The previous five-year plan period ran from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2022. In February, the Dubuque Works partners engaged in a half-day strategic planning session. The goal was to evaluate and align on the purpose, role and goals of Dubuque Works to inform the plan to govern work for the next five years: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2027.



Jessica Reilly

Rick Dickinson, president and CEO of Greater Dubuque Development Corp., speaks during the organization's annual meeting at Steeple Square.

"Solutions developed through Dubuque Works reflect consideration of demographic and workforce data, as well as outreach to targeted populations. This understanding of the labor pool, combined with information gathered from in-depth human resources action and info action interviews with companies creates the opportunity for custom solutions for the greater Dubuque

Continued on page 12



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Jessica Reilly

People attend the Greater Dubuque Development Corp. annual meeting at Steeple Square in Dubuque.

Continued from page 11

area,” Hockenberry said.

There are 27 Dubuque Works partners, including the City of Dubuque, Clarke University, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce, the Dubuque Community

School District, East Central Intergovernmental Association, Emmaus Bible College, Goodwill, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Loras College, Multicultural Center, Travel Dubuque, University of Dubuque, University of Wisconsin-Platteville, the Western Dubuque Community School District and the Telegraph Herald.

One of the programs of Dubuque Works

is Opportunity Dubuque a collaborative job training effort developed in response to local employers’ needs for a skilled workforce. This nationally recognized program builds career opportunities with local businesses and Northeast Iowa Community

Continued on page 14

UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS COMPARISON APRIL 2020 (EARLY PANDEMIC) AND SEPTEMBER 2022 (CURRENT)

Tristate Unemployment Rates	April 2020 Percentage of unemployment	April 2020 Number of unemployed	September 2022 Percentage of unemployment	September 2022 Number of unemployed
Iowa	10.5%	180,434	2.7%	46,479
Illinois	14.5%	1,108,211	4.9%	290,602
Wisconsin	14.1%	434,733	3.2%	99,864

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics


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Alliance for Construction Excellence

The Alliance for Construction Excellence is a committee of the Dubuque Area Labor-Management Council. The Alliance is committed to the concept of “**safe, quality construction, on time and within budget**” using union contractors.

Why Choose A Union Contractor?

Safety

OSHA safety and on-the-job training under the guidance of a seasoned journeyman, workers in training (apprentices) receive a thorough and complete understanding of their profession.

Increased Productivity

Economic experts have estimated that union construction productivity can be as high as 17%-22% greater than non-union companies.

Track Record

Union contractors have a proven track record of performing to the highest standards in the industry. They have a proven reputation of excelling on fast track and demanding projects where other contractors would falter. Union contractors can assure owners that “unskilled laborers” will not perform work that requires special knowledge or experience.



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Geisler Brothers Company

Modern Piping Company
Paulson Electric Company
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Continued from page 12

College's Career Pathways Certificate.

Frank Washington is an Opportunity Dubuque/Career Pathways graduate who completed the commercial driver's license certificate at NICC.

"Before I started the CDL program at NICC, I knew nothing about the truck. I grew and learned. Now I'm driving full time for Atlantic Bottling Co. That's what I want to keep doing — developing my skills and knowledge," Washington said in a release.

Most Career Pathway Certificates at NICC can be completed in four to six months. The programs provide hands-on training to lead to entry-level employment. Some of the programs have employer sponsors that hire the CPC graduates. Students have the option of transferring credit into a diploma or two-year degree program to increase their employment options and earning potential.

Within specific CPC programs, tuition assistance and childcare support is available to those who qualify. In partnership with the GDDC, the NICC will provide childcare assistance at no cost while students are in class for select CPC programs. In addition, full-time employed graduates from select CPC programs may qualify for additional childcare support for up to 12 months at a licensed or registered childcare provider. Learn more about Career Pathway Certificates at nicc.edu/academics/programs-by-award/career-pathway-certificates.

Since 2012, more than 850 students have graduated from Opportunity Dubuque programs in 18 high demand disciplines including advanced manufacturing, transportation, health and information technology. Opportunity Dubuque is funded through the GDDC with commitments

Continued on page 15

IN HIS WORDS

"Before I started the CDL program at NICC, I knew nothing about the truck. I grew and learned. Now I'm driving full time for Atlantic Bottling Co. That's what I want to keep doing — developing my skills and knowledge."

Frank Washington

Contributed

Stacie Halverson, vice president human resources at Kendall Hunt Publishing-Westmark Enterprises-Great River Learning, participated in the Work that Works program through Dubuque Works.



Contributed

Frank Washington is a student who participated in the Opportunity Dubuque program and received support to complete Northeast Iowa Community College's commercial driver's license certificate.



Continued from page 14

from the City of Dubuque, Dubuque County and the DRA/Q Casino.

While Opportunity Dubuque works to create skilled workers, another Dubuque Works program — Work That Works is the newest program and an innovative solution to filling the growing workforce needs of area employers and connecting students at area colleges with high-paying jobs.

Students at Clarke, Loras, Emmaus, NICC, University of Dubuque and the UW-Platteville are employed with local employers. Opportunities vary from retail, warehousing and manufacturing with many paying up to \$23 per hour. Work That Works is not an internship program. The goal of the program is to connect employers with students looking for employment. The work experience could provide an additional avenue to recruit students into internship programs once they have determined their academic focus.

“The Work That Works program is a great opportunity for us to connect with students in the area,” Stacie Halverson, vice president human resources, Kendall Hunt Publishing, Westmark Enterprises and Great River Learning said. The publishing company has partnered with the GDDC for many years.

“Work That Works promotes the opportunities we have here at Kendall Hunt Publishing, Westmark Enterprises, and Great River Learning in a way that speaks to what students are looking for. We work with student’s class schedules and appreciate area institutions of higher learning working with the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation to match students with our current job openings,” Halverson said.

IN HER WORDS

“Work That Works promotes the opportunities we have here at Kendall Hunt Publishing, Westmark Enterprises, and Great River Learning in a way that speaks to what students are looking for.”

Stacie Halverson



Jessica Reilly

Rick Dickinson (right), president and CEO of Greater Dubuque Development Corp., presents Mike Donohue with a paddle during the annual meeting at Convivium Urban Farmstead in 2018.

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Competitive advantage: Building off the foundation



**TODD
LINK**
Dupaco
Community
Credit
Union

He is senior vice president of risk management and remote delivery at the Dubuque institution

One of the most vexing challenges for modern business is the concept of creating sustainable competitive advantage. Look no further than the S&P 500.

Companies had an average time on the index of 90 years in 1935, 32 years in 1965 and less than 18 years today. The implication? As consumer behavior shifts at a rapidly accelerating pace, so, too, must companies retool and reimagine to remain relevant. Without relevancy, a precipitous decline is in order.

Companies that exited the S&P index since 2002 include such iconic brands as Radio Shack, Circuit City, Kodak, Maytag, Sears, Compaq, Texaco and Quaker. Replacing these companies include the likes of Family Dollar, eBay, Google, Netflix, Amazon, Nvidia and Salesforce.com.

Jeff Bezos might have summed up a leader's role in large companies best: "Amazon will go bankrupt. If you look at large companies, their lifespans tend to be 30-plus years, not a hundred-plus years." Bezos went on to say that his job was to delay that date as long as possible (Bezos, 2021).

During the period of Six Sigma and lean manufacturing, there was incredible focus on becoming the most efficient organization in producing a product. That certainly resonated in the U.S. where manufacturing advancements and productivity gains (including quality improvements) had struggled.

However, while efficiency is a key component in overall organizational health it should not be the only differentiator. Because, by-and-large, a manufacturer can hire expertise to drive production efficiency and quality, but without differentiation, price often becomes the prime differentiator.

Where companies create lasting impact with competitive advantage is to compete at the margins on items that are not easy to reproduce. A great example is Berkshire's investment in rail service. This is a high barrier to entry market based on the massive capital infrastructure required.

If, for example, you have the largest distribution network in the region, you leverage that as a point of

competitive differentiation (faster deliveries, same day deliveries, less shipping costs, more selection, just in time inventory, etc.).

For a competitor to compete, they would have to expend millions on building out a similar distribution network. Or, perhaps service is your advantage. But, to provide five-star service today requires the ability to serve clients 24/7/365. Building out that competitive service edge and support model that is 24/7/365 often can be a formidable competitive advantage.

Product differentiation is another means of gaining competitive advantage.

Too often, we see copycats open in a market. A business with a great idea hits the ground running, and other entrepreneurs see their success and quickly several others open with similar products — until there is little competitive advantage for any of the businesses.

To compete on product differentiation, let's set the barriers to competitive entry so high with quality products, proprietary recipes, unique experience and the like that even if someone attempts to emulate your formula they simply cannot duplicate it.

People are willing to pay for quality service and quality products. Consumers always are willing to pay for expertise and respected advice.

Consumers also are craving experiences. We spent several vacations staying at the same Florida resort not because it was the cheapest but rather the resort understood how to make families have memorable vacations that younger kids loved.

In today's world, we must dare to go to new frontiers, test new products and services before consumers even

realize a need and be willing to fail. Yes, failing is a part of the process.

But failing fast and failing cheap is the key component. And, while we tweak areas of an operation let's never forget what makes you great and let's not diminish the parts of your business that are working well and hitting home runs. These become the foundation upon which other change is built.

TODD SAYS

Too often, we see copycats open in a market. A business with a great idea hits the ground running, and other entrepreneurs see their success and quickly several others open with similar products — until there is little competitive advantage for any of the businesses.

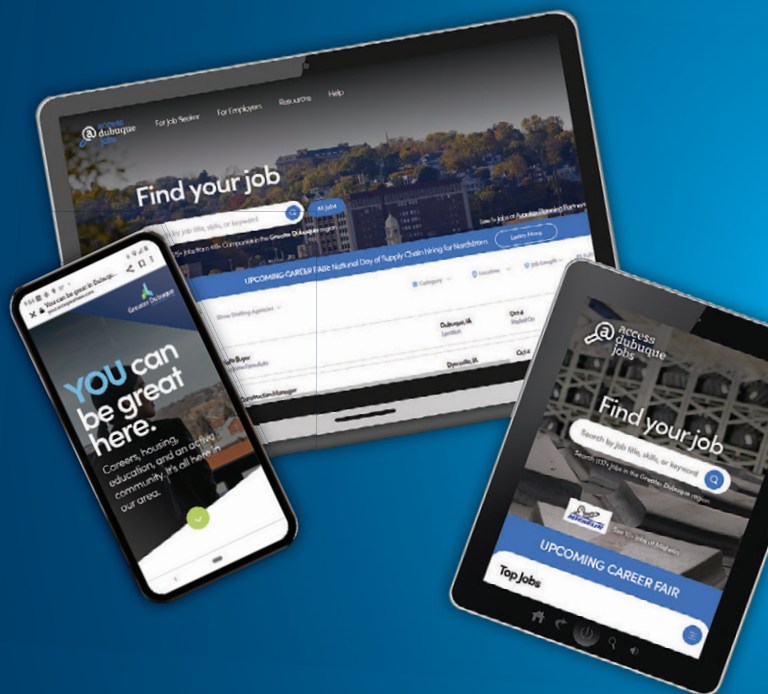
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at 563-557-9049.

Quiet quitter: Is that who you want to be?



**KATHIE
ROTZ**
Unity
Consulting

She is a leadership consultant and John Maxwell Certified speaker, trainer and coach with the Dubuque business

Old habits within the workplace have found a resurgence in the mainstream media. Although this phenomenon always has existed, it has found a trendy, new name.

"Quiet quitting," as it is lovingly called, is when a worker has decided to limit their job output to only items strictly listed within their job description. Workers who adopt this practice love the phrase, "That's not my job."

The Maxwell Leadership Executive podcast episode No. 206 asks if this is an employee problem or a leadership problem. A Harvard Business Review article says, "Quiet Quitting Is About Bad Bosses, Not Bad Employees."

I disagree. I think this intentional practice is about bad bosses and bad employees. Maybe neither group of people are bad. However, they might be ignorantly choosing poor work habits.

BAD BOSSES

According to the HBR article, employees quietly quit when they feel undervalued and unappreciated. Leading people is all about people.

When leaders embrace the value of relationships, trust will be created and profits will increase. If you can connect and motivate multiple team members to run the same race you're running, you will go further, faster than if you were running alone.

BAD EMPLOYEES

We can only control ourselves. When we choose to quit quietly, we violate our character and integrity. Is this who we want to be?

Work is challenging, especially when we feel overworked or underappreciated, but we must press through. We could be creating bad habits that will be tough to change when we move to a new job or organization.

I am embarrassed to admit that I have quietly quit in the past. One example was during the turn of the century when I was a computer programmer, working

through the Y2K challenges.

To successfully reprogram the computers to accept the year 2000, we were strongly encouraged to work 80 hours per week during the last four months of 1999. I had a 6-month-old baby at home, plus two toddlers. Thankfully I also had a supportive husband who is a great dad and could handle the chaos for a bit.

Our team met the deadline and successfully reprogrammed the computer systems so that the business continued as usual on Jan. 1, 2000. However, I was exhausted, and I missed my personal life. I desperately needed time alone and with my family. After the new year, I chose to "find balance" and "set boundaries" — aka I quietly quit.

Thankfully, I realized that doing the minimum to complete my job responsibilities is not who I am. I am creative and motivated to go above and beyond. I can't stay in this slump, be a good employee and be proud of my work.

How did I get out of the "quiet quitting" attitude?

I created and prioritized my life boundaries. My work is important, and so is my family. I can do both. My husband and I scheduled routine date nights. I added the kid's events to my calendar and found

ways to attend.

I found fun and rewarding projects at my job. During this time, I consumed learning and development books. This obsession led me to create dynamic training programs for co-workers and clients. I can thank 1999 for guiding me toward my life's passion.

I had a boss who wasn't afraid to have tough conversations with me to discuss my thoughts and attitudes. She challenged me to be bigger and better. (Thank you, Sheri).

How about you? Are you quietly quitting on anything? Is this who you want to be?

Remember, this is just a bad habit. Now that you know the dangers, you can adjust your course. Choose a path that will increase your character and integrity. This decision might direct you toward your life's passion.

KATHIE SAYS

When leaders embrace the value of relationships, trust will be created and profits will increase. If you can connect and motivate multiple team members to run the same race you're running, you will go further, faster than if you were running alone.

Workforce Solutions

Earn and Learn partnerships positively impact business success, recruitment and retention. Local businesses send their employees to Northeast Iowa Community College to develop their skills. These employees receive a paycheck and contribute their new skills and knowledge directly to the company. Earn and Learn programs provide direct benefits to companies of all sizes, from 10 to 500 employees.

Benefits For Businesses

- ✓ Stay competitive, save time and money - all without slowing down production.
- ✓ Develops workforce talent
- ✓ Enhances employee retention

Benefits for Employees

- ✓ Tuition assistance
- ✓ Opportunity to gain new skills
- ✓ Increased earning potential and advancement opportunities



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Andrew Mozena

President and CEO of Premier Bank

Andrew Mozena began his career with Premier Bank in Dubuque at its inception in October 1998. He worked in numerous capacities until he was named president and CEO on March 23, 2020.

In those positions, he is responsible for the oversight and direction of Premier Bank, while providing philanthropic support to the community in which the bank serves. Mozena is a volunteer serving on the board of Greater Dubuque Development Corp., Finley Health Foundation and Convivium Urban Farmstead among other organizations.

The Mozena family members are avid supporters of arts and heritage in Dubuque, and have been recognized with local and national accolades with a BCA10 award by Americans for the Arts as one of the top 10 companies in the nation supporting the arts.

Mozena is a native of Dubuque and holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa. Additionally, he has completed the AMA Commercial Lending School at SMU, and the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Andy is married to his wife, Amy, and they have three daughters, Sophia, Hannah and Charlotte. The family enjoys being active in the Dubuque community, traveling the world and have a keen interest in all things culinary.





Mozena talks with Molly Valaskey, senior vice president of retail banking.

in **his** words

Of the three, I believe that vision is the most difficult to articulate and by far the most important predictor of future success. The understanding of what we are trying to achieve together as a company (vision) serves as the blueprint for what we do (mission) and how we go about trying to achieve our goals (core values).

Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader?

Truthfully, I can't pick out one person. I have been blessed with belonging to a family of leaders in Dubuque. From saving historic buildings, preserving cultural heritage, starting businesses, launching festivals and supporting the arts — there have just been so many examples of what leadership is and the one common denominator has been how do we improve our community.

The main lesson I've learned from my family through the years is that while writing checks is important, someone must do the work to make things happen.

What are the most important decisions you make as a leader of your organization?

At their core, most businesses can be boiled down to balancing risk versus reward. My position is to make sure we are operating in a way that provides reasonable reward without taking on untenable risk. Beyond that, I find myself spending a great deal of time considering my co-workers and how we can better provide a rewarding career, while delivering the work/life balance that is so important to all of us.

As an organization gets larger, there can be a tendency for the "institution" to dampen the "inspiration." How do you keep this from happening?

This is an excellent question and one which we have spent a great deal of time considering during the past several years. I believe that you need to know who you are, what you're good at and translate that into a vision for the future.

For instance, we are Dubuquers, and we know how to provide excellent service to our customers. Our vision is to be the financial services provider of choice for the tri-state area. Having a narrow focus allows us to remain inspired to give our best to our customers and community and not be distracted by other opportunities.

I'll be the first to recognize that this isn't a common approach for our industry where nobody is ever large enough. We just happen to disagree and believe that Dubuque has a bright future, and we look forward to playing a small part in realizing that potential.

Which is more important to your organization — mission, core values or vision?

Of the three, I believe that vision is the most difficult to articulate and by far the most important predictor of future success. The understanding of what we are trying to achieve together as a company (vision) serves as the blueprint for what we do (mission) and how we go about trying to achieve our goals (core values).

What is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess?

Grit. Leaders with grit have a combination of perseverance and passion toward long-term goals. You will face countless challenges, failures and setbacks along the way which can become roadblocks if you let them. You must find a way to navigate the roadblocks to successfully realize your vision.

What advice do you have for future leaders?

My advice would be to never say no to an opportunity to prove yourself capable. Many times, people get caught up in the thinking that something "isn't their job" — well make it your job, and use those opportunities to learn something new and show that you are ready to take on more responsibility.

Throughout my career I can't think of a single time when I refused to take something on — regardless of if I wanted to or felt I had the time. I can see the very same trait in the future leaders at our company today.

What lessons can leaders take away from the current pandemic?

The first take-away lesson is to embrace change. I don't know if there is a more regimented or regulated industry than financial services, but if there is I don't want to know about it.

That said, the pandemic laid bare some of our historic beliefs about how we needed to operate and proved that both businesses and customers can adapt quickly. Regardless of whether the motivation for change comes from a positive or negative influence we are up to the task and can adjust quickly to any situation.

Another lesson reinforced through the pandemic is that you need to be at your best when people need you the most. I look to our local health care providers as the high point of this lesson, as we all hunkered down and avoided people, they showed up each day and put themselves at mortal risk to deal head on with the harsh realities of COVID-19. Essentially being at their best when our community needed them most, to me, that is real leadership.

What are two or three of the best things about being a leader?

If your desire to lead is primarily driven by a need to maximize personal or corporate profit, then you are missing the good stuff. A couple of my favorite rewards of being in a leadership position include:

- Watching people grow and succeed as their confidence and expertise take them beyond their own expectations.
- Supporting local entrepreneurs and seeing their dreams get realized through hard work and innovation.
- The ability to inspire and make decisions that positively impact this great community in which we serve.

Partnerships essential to overcome workforce shortage



**WENDY
MIHM-
HEROLD**
Northeast
Iowa
Community
College

She is vice president of business and community solutions at the institution

The baby boomer exit from the workforce has been expected for the past 10 years with an estimated two million leaving the workforce per year — but no one could have predicted the United States going into a pandemic, escalating numbers to three million baby boomers leaving in 2020 and approximately 11 million employees leaving for various reasons.

Experts predicted that by 2025, most of the boomers, many among the highest educated employees, would retire and take with them a wealth of knowledge as they vacated higher level professional and technical positions. According to Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce data, by 2031, 40% of jobs will require at least a bachelor's degree and the remainder two years of education, apprenticeships or certificates.

With looming skills shortages and job openings as well as Iowa's unemployment rate remaining low at 2.6%, many local businesses need skilled employees but are not able to hire enough qualified people to fill positions. Additionally, individuals with a desire to advance their skills and education face barriers to training and full-time employment, such as transportation, housing and affordable childcare.

One solution is to enhance partnerships between colleges and universities, businesses, workforce agencies and local organizations in northeast Iowa to support the needs of our economy. These partnerships can assist businesses in focusing their attention on the untapped labor market in the following key areas:

- Individuals who are not employed (e.g. females with young children who are not working, people with disabilities, retired workers, high school graduates). Programs like Opportunity Dubuque/Career Pathway Certificates can assist individuals with short-term training, and earn and learn opportunities can get people back to work in high-demand occupations.

- Employed individuals (e.g. people working in other states that might be persuaded to work in Iowa). Greater Dubuque Development Corp. is working to attract and recruit talent to Iowa through a variety of services including the Big Life/Small City campaign and You Can Be Great Here, along with multiple eco-

nomic groups promoting our communities. Top local employers are focusing on retention to build a strong culture of people and working with colleges to assist with training.

- Process improvements (reducing the need to hire more workers by getting more output from existing workers). Colleges can provide customized training solutions for businesses to upskill and train employees in LEAN and continuous quality improvement practices.

- Automation (reducing the need to hire more workers by providing automation support to existing workers). Iowa State University Center for Industrial Research and Service and colleges can work with businesses to implement automation into the workplace as part of the state's Manufacturing 4.0 initiative.

- K-16 students (e.g. apprenticeships/career pathway certificates/opportunity Dubuque). Colleges and partner agencies can connect businesses with area students to engage with them through career and technical education programs in the schools, such as work-based learning programs that include job shadows, tours and work experience; registered apprenticeships and career academies.

The above points offer promising solutions and are reinforced through the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) which advises employees in human resource positions to look at how they can get into these untapped markets and reinvent their recruitment strategies with the following eight steps: Identify overlooked talent pools, refocus your recruitment model, revise your hiring procedures, train your hiring teams, create or expand training programs, network with resources in your community, understand when and how to use foreign talent,

and identify available tax credits. (SHRM.com).

The workforce shortage is a nationwide problem and cannot be solved by one person or one organization alone. Therefore, it is essential that communities work together through private and public partnerships to find and create workforce solutions. These solutions are possible by pooling resources between organizations to expand reach and effectiveness to build a strong, skilled workforce for tomorrow and for generations to come.

WENDY SAYS

One solution is to enhance partnerships between colleges and universities, businesses, workforce agencies and local organizations in northeast Iowa to support the needs of our economy. These partnerships can assist businesses in focusing their attention on the untapped labor market.

SALUTE TO WOMEN



JESSICA REILLY

People attend the Salute to Women Awards at Diamond Jo Casino in Dubuque on Wednesday, Oct. 5.



Cindy Tang received the award for Woman of Innovation.



Laura Chandlee received the award for Woman Who Makes a Difference.



Keynote speaker Kay Takes, MercyOne Eastern Iowa Region president.



Teri Hawks Goodmann received the award for Woman of the Year.



Lauren Czesinski received the award for Woman to Watch.

STATE OF THE CITY



JESSICA REILLY

Attendees listen to Dubuque Mayor Brad Cavanagh speak during the State of the City luncheon at Hotel Julien Dubuque on Tuesday, Oct. 11.



Cavanagh (left) speaks with Samuel Fleming.



Cavanagh speaks with Kay Takes.



Cavanagh provided an overview of recent city accomplishments, current initiatives and upcoming projects.

DUBUQUE MAIN STREET AWARDS CELEBRATION

Dubuque Main Street officials handed out their annual business awards.

The winners were unveiled during the State of Main Awards Celebration, held at Hotel Julien Dubuque.

The awards “signify excellence in downtown development in the areas of economic development, design, organization and promotion,” an online event announcement states.

The following businesses and individuals were honored:

- Best retail expansion: Jubeck New World Brewing, 115 W. 11th St.
- Best new nightlife venue: Esther’s Lounge, 123 Main St.
- Best new retail: The Sorpresa Gifts, 269 Main St.
- Best community-initiated project: Dubuque Food Pantry, 1310 White St.
- Best visual merchandising: Fig Leaf, 345 Bluff St.
- Best food service expansion: The Crepe Iron
- Best downtown relocation: Origin Design, 137 Main St.
- Best facade improvement: Mozena Realty Group, 1540 Central Ave.
- Best total building rehab: Conlon Construction Co. for Kretschmer Lofts, 895 Washington St.
- Best lower-level adaptive renovation: Steeple Square lower level, 101 E. 15th St.
- Volunteer of the Year: Jennifer Atchison
- Russ & Ruth Nash Cultural Corridor Award: Bryce Parks
- Dan LoBianco Lifetime Achievement Award: Nelson Klavitter



STEPHEN GASSMAN

Dubuque Main Street’s outgoing executive director Dan LoBianco.



Dubuque Main Street’s new executive director Danielle Jacobs.



Dubuque Main Street’s board president Jeff Vaassen.



A raffle table at Dubuque Main Street’s annual awards program at the Hotel Julien Dubuque on Tuesday, Oct. 25.



Attendees follow the program at the yearly event.



Dubuque Main Street’s awards sit on a table.



Area cheerleaders perform during the annual awards program.



Dubuque Main Street board member, Amy Green, (from left) and event and resources specialist, Laura Bertjens, check in guests.

RIBBON CUTTINGS



Dubuque Food Pantry, 1310 White St., Dubuque.



Rusty Taco, 3333 Asbury Road, Dubuque.



A&G Electric Co., 10501 Iowa 3, Dubuque.



River City Logistics, 131 W. 10th St., Dubuque.



Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce
Fox Den Motel & Kitchen Brigade, 920 Main St., Dubuque.



Northeast Iowa Community College, Peosta Campus, 8342
NICC Drive, Peosta, Iowa.



Legacy Made Xperience, 1486 Central Ave., Dubuque.



Holy Ghost Early
Childhood, 2981
Central Ave.,
Dubuque.

Succession planning: An answer to challenges



**LAURI
FLANAGAN**
Management
Resource
Group

She is president
of the Davenport,
Iowa-based
business

Succession planning is critical to the future of your business, yet most companies don't plan for it.

It's inevitable that people will retire, but most people ignore it. What is bringing this issue to the top of the "to do" list? It is the exiting of baby boomers from the market and the increase in early retirements during the pandemic, which has accelerated the exodus.

To start the succession planning process, know who will be retiring within two to five years, then identify internal high potentials whom you can prepare to take over.

When deciding who these people are, it is important to look at their past performance and to assess whether they have the capacity and willingness to move into a management role.

When you choose your high potentials, they might not be the highest individual producers. The skills and competencies required to manage and lead people are completely different.

Once you have identified your candidates and have

confirmed their interest in a potential promotion, there are important next steps.

First you must assess their capacity for a new role. Second, you should benchmark their skills and knowledge to determine what they will need to work on in a development plan.

Assessments should include a "360" evaluation, a measure of critical thinking, numeric reasoning, emotional intelligence, personality inventory, and an understanding and knowledge of leadership and people management.

Putting a succession plan together not only ensures you will have future management in place, but also it will be unnecessary to go to the outside and figure out whether a candidate will fit in your culture.

The most important part of putting together a formal program will be the effect it will have on recruitment and retention of talent. If you are looking for one of the special ingredients to retention, it is engagement and willingness to invest in people who demonstrate potential.

LAURI SAYS

To start the succession planning process, know who will be retiring within two to five years, then identify internal high potentials whom you can prepare to take over.

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Rediscover your potential with 3 mental hacks



**LISA
MCLEOD**

She is an author
and business
consultant

Children are inherent dreamers. They have imaginary friends, create games and change direction all the time, viewing the world as a place full of possibility.

I watched my children start a new “business” every weekend, from lemonade stands, to jewelry made from sticks, to “ice sculptures” (i.e. frozen water balloons).

On a regular basis, children are asked what they want to be when they grow up. The options are endless.

But once we are “grown-up” (I use that term loosely) the dreaming slows down. We spend less time imagining and more time worrying.

In times of stress, our brain focuses on what we have to do vs. what we could do. Sometimes, without even realizing it, the dreaming stops.

Left unchecked, that dreamless spiral can give way to all kinds of mental weight: Imposter syndrome, self-doubt and the sometimes-crippling fear that we aren’t living up to our potential.

And when your potential seems vague, the thought spiral can become even more anxiety-inducing. Here are three tips to reconnect to what you’re capable of:

IDENTIFY WHEN YOU ARE IN ‘FLOW’

Flow is a concept in positive psychology defined as a mental state of focused attention so intense that it does not allow us to have cognitive bandwidth left for anything else. It is a state of such profound task absorption and intense concentration that makes a person feel one with the activity.

Now you might be thinking: I never feel that when I’m creating reports or preparing for a meeting. That’s OK.

Think about when you feel it potentially outside of your day job. Is it when you’re solving problems, connecting with other people or thinking creatively? Knowing what lights up our adult brain helps us rediscover what we are inherently great at.

ASK YOUR FRIENDS OR COLLEAGUES WHAT THEY THINK IS POSSIBLE

The people around us, those who have worked with us on projects, seen us grow or heard our ideas can be more in touch with our potential than we are ourselves.

High achievers tend to discount their accomplishments by saying “it’s no big deal” or “it’s not even that good.”

When we discount the present, we shortchange the future. Look back at the positive feedback you’ve received and start taking opinions from trusted sources. This regular practice will help you see your potential more clearly.

INTERVIEW FOR A NEW JOB

Even if you have no intention of leaving your role, this process gives your brain permission to explore the potential. Here’s something that struck me from Laura Gassner Otting’s recent TEDx talk, Why doesn’t success bring happiness?

She said, “Do you know why internal candidates always leave if they don’t get the job? Because the very process of interviewing for the bigger job means that once they saw themselves in this new way, even if for a moment, they couldn’t unsee themselves in this new way.”

My friend and colleague Whitney Johnson first teased out that snippet. To me, this point lands, because once you see the possibility of something — a new job, a new career, even your internal project taking off — you can’t unsee it.

So, whether it’s a new role, filling out an RFP or applying to give a TEDx talk, allowing your brain to sit in the what if stage helps you reconnect with possibility.

Recognizing your true potential comes with both promise and heartbreak. Promise because you know what’s possible, and heartbreak, because you know what’s possible.

Too often, we cover our eyes, bury our heads into our to-do lists, and forget what’s possible for our lives. We cost the world, and ourselves, so much when we lose sight of our potential.

LISA SAYS

In times of stress, our brain focuses on what we have to do vs. what we could do. Sometimes, without even realizing it, the dreaming stops.

Left unchecked, that dreamless spiral can give way to all kinds of mental weight: Imposter syndrome, self-doubt and the sometimes-crippling fear that we aren’t living up to our potential.

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Siebert



Haverland



Nieto-Caceres



Townsend



Feldmann



Lopez



Dodds



McCarville

TELEGRAPH HERALD

HIRED: Cassandra Siebert as account executive for outside sales.

HIRED: Steve Delaney as a copy editor.

MEDICAL ASSOCIATES

HIRED: Emily Haverland as a skilled and long-term care provider.

HIRED: Patty Nieto-Caceres to the psychiatry and psychology department.

DUBUQUE BANK & TRUST

HIRED: Drew Townsend as the commercial team lead for the Dubuque market.

TRI-TECH

HIRED: Kaitlin Feldmann as a standard support technician.

NORTHEAST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ACHIEVEMENT: Gena Gesing, manager of career and work-based learning for Business and Community Solutions, received the 2022 Iowa ACTE Counseling and Career Development Professional award.

DIAMOND JO CASINO

PROMOTED: Alfredo Lopez to manager of FanDuel Sportsbook.

IOWA CREDIT UNION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ACHIEVEMENT: Matt Dodds, of Dupaco Community Credit Union, has been elected to serve as chair of the Iowa Credit Union League Board of Directors.



Halverson



Pearson

KIWANIS CLUB OF DUBUQUE OFFICERS

ACHIEVEMENTS: Nora McCarville, president; Cindy Kohlmann, president-elect; Dan Morizzo, vice president; Douglas Spyrisson, treasurer; Susan Henricks, secretary.

IOWA HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

ACHIEVEMENTS: The following were named as Hospital Heroes: Michelle Arensdorf, of MercyOne Dubuque Medical Center; Michele Dikkers, of Guttenberg Municipal Hospital & Clinics, and Karen Gronau, of UnityPoint Health-Finley Hospital.

WOODWARD PRINTING SERVICES

HIRED: Becky Halverson as bindery manager.

HIRED: Sean Pearson as bindery utility I.

BODINE ELECTRIC CO.

HIRED: Jeffrey Mobley in the assembly department.

HIRED: Alex Klein in the gear department.

HIRED: Alex Bushman in the gear department.

HIRED: Herman Baldwin in the gear department.

HIRED: Chase Anderson in the shaft department.

HIRED: Sam Firzlaft in the shaft department.

PROMOTED: Alexis Drouillard to CNC set up and operate B in the shaft department.

PROMOTED: Daniel Ross to automation tech.

PROMOTED: Sean Cahill to CNC set up and operate A in the structural department.

PROMOTED: Jody Peavy to CNC set up and operate B in the gear department.

Continued on page 31



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Continued from page 30

**COTTINGHAM
& BUTLER****HIRED: Dakota Carden** as captain.**HIRED: Tyler Pike** as a quality assurance representative.**HIRED: Jack Eldred** as a sales executive.**HIRED: Dakota Hoecker** as a marketer.**HIRED: Briana Minet** as client service representative.**HIRED: Maddie McDonald** as client service representative.**HIRED: Alex Trentz** as client service representative.**HIRED: Destiny Kunkel** as client service representative.**HIRED: Nick Tauke** as client service representative.**HIRED: Ian Merrill** as infra and security engineer II.**HIRED: Mary Hird** as an executive assistant.**HIRED: Katherine Steffens** as service representative.**HIRED: Hope Jansen** as service representative.**HIRED: Taylor Robinson** as an associate client consultant.**HIRED: Epifanio Estrada** as a sales executive.**HIRED: Marie Blum** as a brokerage claims coordinator.**HIRED: Tom Frederick** as a claims representative.**HIRED: Ava Frye** as a claims admin-

istrator.

HIRED: Tayler Copeland as a claims coordinator.**HTLF****HIRED: Melisa Lopez** as a treasury department wire transfer clerk.**HIRED: Aubrey Pollock** as administrative assistant.**HIRED: Christopher Bechen** as administrative assistant.

Continued on page 32

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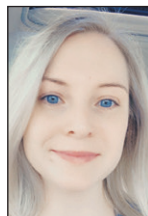
Klein



Nicks



Davis



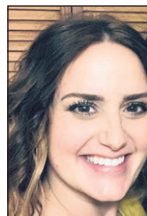
Cray



Flynn



Blech



Ranniger



Braun



Coenen



Huinker



Slaght



Brandel



Garcia



Reed



Tucker



Ervolino



Dobbeleare



Yonda



Bell

Continued from page 31

MCGRAW HILL

HIRED: Noah Moss as a release manager.

PROMOTED: Jaime Klar to senior CRM support analyst.

PROMOTED: Sheri Glew to business development manager.

PROMOTED: Mary Klein to executive manager.

PROMOTED: Lisa Nicks to executive manager.

PROMOTED: Abby Davis to senior content manager.

PROMOTED: Beth Cray to senior content licensing specialist.

PROMOTED: Sarah Flynn to senior content licensing specialist.

PROMOTED: Beth Blech to senior designer.

PROMOTED: Ann Ranniger to senior customer success consultant.

PROMOTED: Erin Neebel to senior business development representative.

PROMOTED: Carrie Braun to lead custom project manager, digital.

PROMOTED: Shawn Coenen to support engineer.

PROMOTED: Lisa Huinker to senior business development manager.

PROMOTED: Casey Slaght to senior business development managers.

PROMOTED: Hope Brandel to senior sales solutions representative.

PROMOTED: Matthew Garcia to executive portfolio manager.

PROMOTED: Robin Reed to senior product development manager.

PROMOTED: Courtney Tucker to se-

nior solutions manager.

PROMOTED: Heather Ervolino to senior product developer.

PROMOTED: Marisa Dobbeleare to technical product management.

PROMOTED: Amanda Yonda to associate manager.

STATERA INTEGRATED HEALTH AND WELLNESS SOLUTIONS

HIRED: Rebekah Bell as a medical aesthetician.

Story suggestion? Want to write for bizTimes.biz?

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Q CASINO NAMES COMPLIANCE MANAGER

Q Casino announced **Brian Carpenter** as the manager of compliance and risk management. He will be responsible for documenting regulatory and compliance policies, procedures and reports, including internal controls, company and departmental policies, SOPs and Title 31, and ensuring all re-

cords and employee training are up to date.

FIVE FLAGS GENERAL MANAGER LEAVING FOR NEW POSITION

H.R. Cook, general manager of Dubuque's Five Flags Center, has become a regional vice president of Venuworks Management Co., an Iowa company that "provides customized management solutions for are-



Carpenter

Cook

Fenwick



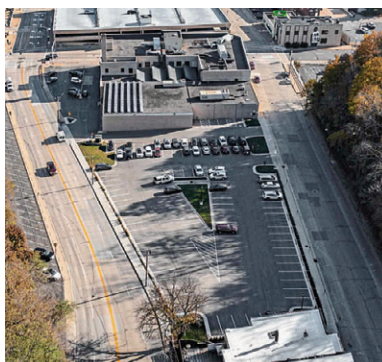
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nas, stadiums, theaters and convention centers throughout the country," according to a press release from Five Flags.

Cook has been general manager of Five Flags Center since 2016 and has worked for ASM Global since 1999.

"I wasn't looking for a new opportunity. I was very happy at Five Flags Center, but it's the 'offer you can't refuse,'" Cook told the TH on Thursday. "The great thing about this new position is that it allows me to stay in Dubuque, which was very important for myself and my wife because we've fallen in love with the community and we want to stay here to enjoy it."

THEISEN CHILDCARE DIRECTOR NAMED

The Marita Theisen Childcare Center hired **Kristy Fenwick** as its director.

MIDWESTONE NAMES CEO

MidWestOne Financial Group, Inc. appointed **Charles Reeves** as its CEO.

NEUROSURGERY LEADER NAMED

UnityPoint Clinic Neurosurgery announced that it will be led by **Catherine Miller**, MD.

Visit
www.biztimes.biz
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business updates

STONEHILL COMMUNITIES RECEIVES WORKPLACE AWARD

Stonehill Communities received the 2022 Excellence in the Workplace Award from LeadingAge Iowa.

LeadingAge also recognized Stonehill Administrator, Peggy Stockel, with the 2022 Award of Honor.

CRESCENT HEALTH CENTER EARNS BADGES

Crescent Community Health Center received the Gold Health Center Quality Leader, Access Enhancer, Health Disparities Reducer, Advancing Health Information Technology (HIT) for Quality, and Patient Centered Medical Home badges from the Health Resources and Services Administration.

UNITYPOINT HEALTH HONORED

The American College of Cardiology named UnityPoint Health-Finley Hospi-

tal in U.S. News & World Report's 2023 "Best Hospitals" guidebook.

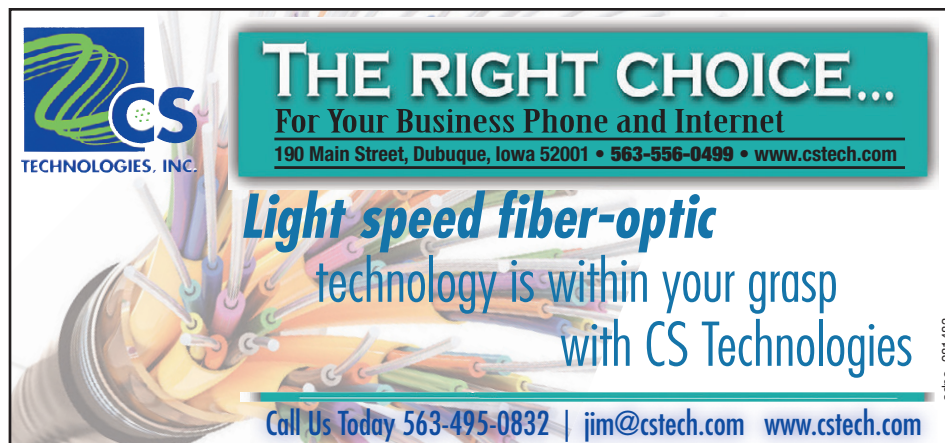
HONKAMP CHANGES NAME

Honkamp Krueger & Co., P.C., a Top 10 Midwest CPA and business advisory group, has changed its name to Honkamp, P.C.

"We are very excited about our new look. In celebration of the firm's 75-year anniversary and to stay modern and relevant with industry and market-

place trends, we decided to revitalize the appearance and feel of our brand. Although we have a new name and logo, the way we do business remains the same," Greg Burbach, CEO, said in a press release.

The firm was founded as an accounting and bookkeeping company in 1947 by John and Peg Law. In 1985, Arnie Honkamp took over the firm revising the name to Honkamp Krueger & Co., P.C. to reflect the names of shareholders Arnie Honkamp and Al Krueger.



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Writing a 'relentless' service culture plan



**JOHN
TSCHOHL**
Service
Quality
Institute

He is the founder
and president of
the organization

One of the major weaknesses of most organizations is top management's lack of a service strategy.

They fail to realize the strategic opportunity on how to use superior service as a vehicle to build market share and market dominance. That is why I wrote the book, "Relentless."

Sam Walton, one of the most powerful retailers in the world, built Walmart on customer service and price. They are now known for price only. The value of the company as a service leader has dropped as it has lost focus on customer service when Lee Scott took over as CEO in January 2000.

When Scott left in January 2009 the stock value was less than when he started as CEO. I always had trouble understanding why management for Walmart has simply focused on price alone for the past 13 years.

The \$1,000 I invested in Walmart and eight other service leaders in May 2003 is only worth \$3,499 as of October 2022. The investment at Amazon is worth \$73,478, Costco \$19,648 and Home Depot \$14,858. All three provide relentless customer service.

Very few executives understand the financial impact when you provide relentless customer service year after year. COVID-19 gave most firms in the world an opportunity to abandon customer service. A fatal mistake.

Along came Amazon. Jeff Bezos, Amazon's founder and executive chair, is one of the world's richest person as of October with a net worth of \$138.6 billion. He built his company to become the most trusted and well-liked brand. No one can challenge it.

Wal-Mart is so far behind.

Bezos is responsible for creating more than 352,000 full-time jobs since 2020 for the American economy and is on schedule to create more.

Use these guidelines in making decisions about the features of your service culture plan:

- Under-promise and over-deliver. Don't make a promise you can't keep.
- Only the customer knows what he or she wants.
- Make it easy to do business with your company.
- Customers want speed of service.
- Customers want to talk to a live person.
- Return phone calls immediately.
- Always deliver on your promises.
- Communicate. Be like Amazon and have a focus on customer service through regular communication.

Continue to drive the plan strategically. According to Bezos, "Focus on the things that don't change." Bezos built Amazon around things he knew would be stable over time.

In my book, I state that if you want to grow and succeed long-term. You got to be a service leader. To do that, you've got to be relentless.

Also essential is a chief executive who is just as committed to customer satisfaction as he is to stockholder satisfaction — just look at Amazon, Costco and Home Depot.

JOHN SAYS

Very few executives understand the financial impact when you provide relentless customer service year after year. COVID-19 gave most firms in the world an opportunity to abandon customer service. A fatal mistake.

BIZ LOCAL

MEMORIAL HOSPITAL HONORED

The National Rural Health Association named Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County as one of its Best Practice award recipients for patient satisfaction.

TRI VET FETED

The Iowa Veterinary Medical Association awarded Tri Vet Associates, Dyersville, Iowa, the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association award.

MCCOY GROUP BUYS MINNESOTA BUSINESS

A Dubuque-based company has acquired the tanker trucking business of

another transportation firm.

McCoy Group, the parent company of Foodliner Inc., purchased the tank transportation services of Bay & Bay, according to a press release from the Burnsville, Minn., company. The terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Foodliner will continue to operate the tank trucking business out of an existing Burnsville facility, according to the release. Bay & Bay's other operations will move to a facility elsewhere in Minnesota.

MCGOVERN HARDWARE REOPENS IN NEW LOCATION

McGovern Hardware has reopened at 3131 Cedar Crest Ridge, Suite A, next

to Olliewood Action Sports. Andrew Mortenson officially took over ownership of the business Sept. 30, when the 2220 University Ave. location closed.

"Right now, we're organizing and have construction to do," Mortenson said. "But it's going to be the same name, same phone number, all that stuff. We're going to carry the same lines (of products)."

McGovern Hardware began as a hardware store in Dubuque in the 1950s before later turning its focus to selling, repairing and offering parts for outdoor power equipment.

Dave Roling, who owned the business before Mortenson, worked at McGovern Hardware for more than two decades. Roling put the business up for sale in May after deciding to retire.

Frank Biondi's daughter tells the story of his business life

BY MEG JAMES

LOS ANGELES — In an industry teeming with publicity-hungry executives, the late Frank Biondi stood apart. An architect of modern-day Hollywood, he quietly shaped media companies into creative powerhouses.

Biondi led HBO in its early years. He helped build Nickelodeon and Comedy Central into iconic brands. He provided critical seed money to a nascent production firm that went on to make “When Harry Met Sally” and “Seinfeld.” He saw value in turning a single show, “Law & Order,” into a multiseries franchise. And he was a guiding force in the formation of the Tennis Channel.

His youngest daughter, Jane Biondi Munna, long felt that few people recognized his many contributions. For years, she would nudge him: “When are you going to write your book?”

“He would laugh and say: ‘I’ll do it when Sumner dies,’” Biondi Munna recalled in a recent interview.

His response hinted at the complexities, and perhaps a lingering sting, from a roller-coaster Hollywood career. Biondi was famously fired by the combative Sumner Redstone, Viacom’s longtime chairman, in 1996 — just as the company was hitting its stride.

Biondi’s unceremonious departure from Viacom is one of many memorable tales included in his memoir, which was self-published by his family after he died. The story of how the book came to be is a remarkable testament to a daughter’s determination to make sure her father’s legacy was honored — and remembered.

Biondi was diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2018, when he was 73. When Frank and his wife, Carol, called from Los Angeles to share the diagnosis, Biondi Munna recalled saying, through tears, “Well, Dad, now you really have to write this book.”

He’d had the same thought. A week or so earlier, Biondi had emailed his daughter — a JP Morgan Chase executive who lives in New York City — a list of building blocks for the book: Experiences from his career and business lessons.

“The next time I was with him, I whipped out my iPad” and began recording, Biondi Munna said. “I didn’t want to waste another minute.”

Thus began a year of reflections and recordings. The project also deepened a bond between father and daughter.

“In his last year, I learned more about



Tribune News Service

Frank Biondi, former CEO of Viacom.

my dad’s life before me and my sister were around — more than I’d ever known,” Biondi Munna said. “I learned about his early jobs, things that shook his confidence and how he thought through certain challenges.”

They had completed recording 40 of his stories when Biondi, then 74, died in November 2019.

While delivering the eulogy at her father’s memorial service, Biondi Munna vowed that she would make sure his book would be finished.

But there were obstacles. Not a single chapter had been written when he died. The publishing house that had expressed interest in the project withdrew. And Biondi Munna and co-writer Jeff Wilser struggled to find a format to present the material without it turning into a “how-to” book on executive leadership, something that her father had said he didn’t want to write.

“After he died, we were left with the individual pieces — parts of a book — but it was not a book,” she said. “So it was like fitting the puzzle pieces together.”

She was desperate to preserve his words — his voice — in his story.

“We had done so much work. And he had related all of these stories — in the toughest year of his life,” she said. “I felt that I had to finish it.”

Biondi’s friends stepped up. To fill in the gaps, high-powered associates — in-

cluding former MTV chief Tom Freston, former Walt Disney Studios and former Warner Bros. film chief Alan Horn, former Paramount Pictures Chairwoman Sherry Lansing, Tennis Channel President Ken Solomon and former Fox President Peter Chernin — provided their remembrances about working with Biondi.

TV personality Dr. Phil McGraw (a friend and frequent tennis partner) contributed his recollections of Biondi’s take on life.

Biondi Munna reluctantly began writing her memories, serving as the book’s narrator, to bridge everyone’s stories.

Writing became her pandemic project, and a labor of love. Last month, the Biondi family self-published “Let’s Be Frank: A Daughter’s Tribute to her Father, the Media Mogul You’ve Never Heard Of,” distributed by River Grove Books.

The 212-page paperback contains Biondi’s insights about how the movie and television business evolved from the 1970s into the early aughts. He started as an investment banker before segueing into cable television. He joined Time Inc.’s Home Box Office in 1978, and became its CEO five years later.

In the mid-1980s, Biondi joined Coca-Cola, after he leaped into Hollywood with the purchase of Columbia Pictures, to run its entertainment division. While there, he assembled an enviable portfolio

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by acquiring Merv Griffin Enterprises (with rights to “Jeopardy” and “Wheel of Fortune”) and Embassy Entertainment (Norman Lear’s company). Biondi also agreed to invest in Castle Rock Entertainment, which then made Rob Reiner movies and “Seinfeld.”

Coke sold the business (after Biondi left) to Sony Corp., which continues to reap huge dividends from his 1980s deals.

Much of Biondi’s career spanned “the era of the media mogul — Steve Ross, Ted Turner, Rupert Murdoch, Sumner Redstone, Michael Eisner and others,” Alan Schwartz, executive chairman of investment firm Guggenheim Partners, said in an interview.

“Back then, the media business was heavily a deal-making business,” Schwartz said, adding that, four decades ago, Biondi helped him navigate a business full of big personalities. Schwartz’s reflections also are contained in the book. “This was an industry with a lot of battles between individuals who always wanted to win,” he said.

In the heat of battle, Biondi revealed his deft touch.

“Frank never tried to win: He tried to get himself a good deal, but he wanted the other guy to walk away with a good deal also,” Schwartz said. “So people wanted to deal with him.”

When Redstone acquired Viacom in 1987, he hired Biondi as CEO. They achieved much success, but one episode altered the dynamic.

Respected media writer Ken Auletta profiled Biondi for a 1995 New Yorker magazine article, “Redstone’s Secret Weapon.” In the first paragraph, Auletta wrote, “Viacom chairman Sumner Redstone is the one who bought Viacom, but Biondi is the one who has built it.”

That infuriated Redstone, and within a

“Frank never tried to win: He tried to get himself a good deal, but he wanted the other guy to walk away with a good deal also,” Schwartz said. “So people wanted to deal with him.”

year, Biondi was bounced.

“He came into my office and closed the door, which was atypical,” Biondi wrote, adding that Redstone then told him: “Look, it’s been terrific working together but I’ve made my mind up. It’s time for you to move on.”

Biondi said he challenged Redstone, saying the business was starting to hum. Redstone replied: “Quite honestly, I’m tired of sharing the credit.” (Redstone then became CEO.)

Neither Biondi nor his daughter took swipes at the Viacom mogul, who died two years ago — nine months after Biondi’s death.

But Biondi did calculate what Viacom’s market value might have been had Redstone held onto Viacom’s original assets and not chased so many headline-grabbing deals — a bid for Paramount Pictures, which nearly sunk the company, then acquiring CBS (then spinning it off, then merging it with Viacom again.) That chapter is called “Sumner Redstone Could Have Been (Really, Really) Rich.”

The book shares lessons in finance, management, the value of hard work and treating people with respect.

Former Microsoft executive Blair Westlake, who worked with him at Universal Studios, described Biondi as possessing a “Jimmy Stewart-like” talent to make difficult endeavors, such as running a media

company, “look easy.”

“He possessed the skills and characteristics of few executives: Secure, focused, unflappable, sense of humor, empathetic,” Westlake said. “Everyone I’ve met who reported to Frank at some point have described him as the ‘best boss in their career.’”

Schwartz said Biondi remained grounded because “Frank never allowed himself to be intoxicated by the media business. He didn’t need the limelight.” That, and, because his greatest love was his wife and their two daughters.

“As outstanding as he was an executive, he was even more outstanding as a friend and as a family man,” Schwartz said.

Biondi Munna acknowledges that, had her father lived longer, they could have written a more complete “window into the world that he lived.” But she was inspired to keep going during the pandemic, “because I kept thinking about how much the world needed to be reminded of a different type of leadership than what we’ve seen in the world and in politics.”

“He was everything you don’t hear a lot about: Kindness, stability, thoughtfulness and hard work,” she said. “There is real value in substance — both in the substance of your work and in the substance of your character.”

Meg James writes for the Los Angeles Times.

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