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TRI-STATE NEWS FOR YOUR BOTTOM LINE

MAY 2023

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succeeds with potent workforce, dedication to culture

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**Faces in Business**  
Theresa Caldwell



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## TAKING CARE OF THE **ENVIRONMENT**

TRI-STATE ORGANIZATIONS TAKE STEWARDSHIP SERIOUSLY

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May 2023  
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## ON THE COVER



Larry Steffen,  
Eagle Point  
Solar executive  
vice president  
of sales and  
marketing.

Photo by  
Dave Kettering

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

# A matter of stewardship

The tri-state area is rich in natural resources, and there is a dedicated contingent that's dedicated to their conservation.

From alternative energy sources to ensuring the education of the next generation of responsible environmental stewards, we've got a look at some of the bright spots of environmental conservation.



Megan Gloss



Anthony Frenzel

## NEXT MONTH

Next month, BizTimes will take a look at Ransomware and how you can protect your business.

Have a story idea? Interested in writing for BizTimes? Email [megan.gloss@thmedia.com](mailto:megan.gloss@thmedia.com) and [tony.frenzel@thmedia.com](mailto:tony.frenzel@thmedia.com).

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# Taking care of the **ENVIRONMENT**

Tri-state organizations take stewardship seriously

BY JILL CARLSON



**C**limate change and the environment are in the news on a daily basis. Those who lead efforts to care for the earth say it's important because there is no plan(et) B.

Many area businesses and organizations are working to enact positive changes such as harnessing solar power, reducing carbon footprints and caring for the air, land and water.

The tri-states are rich in natural resources and these are a few of the organizations who are helping steward them.

#### POWER FROM THE SUN

Harnessing solar power is helping to shape and transform the energy production and distribution of electricity across the U.S. and the world.



Larry Steffen

“Solar is a viable, safe, clean, affordable and proven technology for energy production,” said Larry Steffen, executive vice president of sales and marketing at Eagle Point Solar in Dubuque. “Solar allows us to reduce our dependence on the use of dirty energy extracted from fossil fuels including oil, gas or coal, which in return release harmful carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.”

Eagle Point Solar was founded by Barry Shear in 2010. In 2020, ownership was transferred to a group of four experienced employees and two local investors. In 2022, the business surpassed 100 full-time employees companywide. Its territory covers central and eastern Iowa, northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

The benefits of solar power for businesses include the ability to control energy bills and reduce exposure to future utility rate increases. With tax credits, solar renewable energy credits and energy grants, the cost to install solar panels can be reduced and tax liability also is reduced through federal and state tax credits.

Steffen explained that Eagle Point's process to install solar panels always starts

**Continued on page 7**



File photo

Eagle Point Solar has solar panels on the roof of the Caradco Building in the historic millwork district in Dubuque.

**Continued from page 6**

with education.

“By helping people understand how solar works, they learn about the positive environmental and financial impacts it can have on a business, household income, farm operation, municipality or academic institution,” he said.

After that, Eagle Point technicians conduct an on-site visit to review the property, take photos and measurements and examine electrical infrastructure. The design and engineering teams analyze the annual electric usage to create a customized solar analysis report. This report outlines costs, available incentives, depreciation, array size, return on investment, environmental impact and more.

They then review the information and determine a final design to submit to the client for approval.

“Before our team can install an array, it can take several weeks to prepare a project for installation,” Steffen said. “This often revolves around collecting the necessary permit approvals and equipment procurement.”

The installation of a solar array usually is completed in one or two days for an average residential or small commercial array, once all of paperwork is completed. Installation timeframes can vary based on weather, workload, equipment availability and other outside or uncontrollable factors.

**REDUCING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT**

Sustainable Dubuque promotes sustainability by offering engagement activities through its website, grants, events and other education opportunities. It can show local residents and businesses the action they can take to help make their homes and businesses more sustainable.

“Sustainable Dubuque began in 2007, driven by passionate Dubuque residents who wanted to celebrate community-wide environmental efforts and continue ongoing change,” said Gina Bell, who is sustainable community coordinator with the



**Dave Kettering**

Larry Steffen, executive vice president of sales and marketing with Eagle Point, Solar points out some of the equipment the company installs.



**Gina Bell**

organization.

Former Dubuque Mayor Ray Buol’s dedication to support the Kyoto Protocol — a commitment by industrialized countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets — and the Dubuque City Council naming sustainability a top priority were factors involved in creating Sustainable Dubuque.

“Sustainable Dubuque was the vision for the community and by the community to rebound from economic challenges of the 1980s and a lost connection to the Mississippi River,” Bell said. “The 50% by 2030 greenhouse gas reduction goal isn’t owned by Sustainable Dubuque — it is a communi-

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**IN HIS WORDS**

“By helping people understand how solar works, they learn about the positive environmental and financial impacts it can have on a business, household income, farm operation, municipality or academic institution.”

**Larry Steffen**



Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing Larry Steffen (right) with Eagle Point Solar along with President and CEO Jim Pullen.



Eagle Point Solar was founded in 2010.



Metro Creative

**Continued from page 7**

ty-wide goal, and everyone needs to pitch in and do their fair share. We are all inheriting the changes to climate and its impacts.

“It isn’t about what businesses can do for Sustainable Dubuque, it is about what sustainability can do for businesses. Energy and water usage, waste removal or even just supplies can be a big cost factor for businesses. So, there is an opportunity for businesses to make informed decisions that help their bottom line while also benefiting the planet.”

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 provides a variety of funding and tax credits for going solar, adding insulation or installing energy efficient lighting or heat sources. These incentives also save businesses money. Sustainable Dubuque works with businesses to determine what solution will work for them.

“What Dubuque is achieving today though its Sustainable Dubuque model is the direct result of the knowledge and understanding that sustainability is a balanced approach to long term quality of life,” Bell said. “It is about providing residents and businesses with information so they can save money, save resources and reduce their carbon footprint. That is what is unique in Dubuque’s ability to continue to innovate and transform.”

Sustainable Dubuque’s city-led branch has done a variety of projects — most recently a tree voucher program, low carbon diet competition, a book club and a complete streets bike ride.

“At the core, Sustainable Dubuque is public-centered problem solving,” Bell said. “Addressing housing issues, high energy bills, transportation challenges through climate action and meeting the priorities for the community.”

**STEWARDSHIP THE LAND AND WATER****Steve Barg**

The Jo Daviess (Ill.) Conservation Foundation, a land conservancy located in Jo Daviess County, was founded by a small group of people who loved the Driftless area’s forests, prairies, farmland and streams and wanted to ensure that beauty endured.

“Our mission is ‘To preserve and steward land and water for the lasting well-being of all people and wildlife,’” said Steve Barg, executive director of the organization. “We acquire conservation land from willing sellers that has quality habitat for wildlife, Native American cul-

**Continued on page 10**



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tural resources or important views. After acquisition we typically work to ecologically restore the land or keep it in regenerative agriculture. We open it to the public and have over 50 miles of trails.”

JDCF has worked on many projects, including Horseshoe Mound Preserve, which features 190 acres overlooking Galena with views of the Mississippi River and Driftless geology.

Another, Casper Bluff, borders the Mississippi River and includes a rich array of Native American heritage including the last remaining Thunderbird Effigy in Illinois. It’s a mound formed in the shape of a large raptor with a body measuring 80 feet long and a wingspan of 216 feet.

The preserve also has Illinois’ only

## IN HIS WORDS

“We have around 80 business member partners from mom-and-pop-type shops to large corporate entities. Because everyone depends on clean water, clean air and benefits from being outside in beautiful places to recreate, JDCF endures and grows.”

**Steve Barg**

green, conservation burial cemetery, Casper Creek Natural Cemetery, where people can be buried in natural ways including full-body natural burial, inter-

ment of cremains and ash scattering. The preserve harbors many acres of restored

Continued on page 11



File photo

Steve Barg, executive director of Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, walks through Gateway Park a 100-acre park and trail on the outskirts of Galena, Ill.

Continued from page 10



Metro Creative

Illinois prairie and oak savanna habitats.

JDCF has a business membership program called premier partners, as well. Businesses can partner with JDCF in support of specific projects or offer in-kind support.

“We have around 80 business member partners from mom-and-pop-type shops to large corporate entities,” Barg said. “Because everyone depends on clean water, clean air and benefits from being outside in beautiful places to recreate, JDCF endures and grows.”

## TEACHING ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

In fall of 2020, University of Wisconsin-Platteville launched its bachelors degree program in environmental science and conservation .

“The B.S. in environmental science and conservation is a broad degree that challenges students to take a deep look at environmental issues and especially at the linkages between humans and the environment,” said Chris Underwood, chair of UW-P’s department of environmental sciences and society.

Sixty majors are pursuing the degree and 25 majors are pursuing the teaching bachelors in broad field science.

“The degree is both theoretical and applied, with multiple opportunities for faculty and students to use the outdoors as our classroom,” Underwood said. “Many of our courses have travel components, ranging from local and regional excursions to California, the Pacific Northwest, the Galapagos Islands, the Amazon rainforest and more. Graduates are well-versed in addressing environmental problems at both local and global levels.”

Though there’s no one solution to the conservation and sustainability practices faced by the tri-state area or the broader world, the work of many organizations and businesses continues to have an impact. Together with local residents, they strive every day to leave a lasting, sustainable future for the next generation.

### IN HIS WORDS

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**Chris Underwood**

# District 20

succeeds with potent workforce, dedication to culture



Matt Timmerman, (left) Dennis Noel and Mike Schaul are the owners of District 20 Supply Co.

Stephen Gassman

Continued on page 14



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Bob & Marilyn Hoefler



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BY ANGELA JONES

**T**hose of us who wear printed T-shirts, sports apparel and corporate polos might not think about the place that applies their unique art and precisely followed design. If we do try to imagine it, we might not be able to get a clear picture and certainly not a tidy one.

But for anyone who tours District 20 Supply Co.'s warehouse, tidy is the first impression.

The second is friendliness.

District 20's three co-owners — Dennis "Deno" Noel, Mike Schaul and Matt Timmerman — ensure a warm welcome at the front desk and carry it through to the work areas where 14 full-time and two part-time employees attend to the details of their work, whether front office or in operating areas.

Despite starting out in the car business with his brother, Noel has been in the apparel business for about two decades, and he and Schaul have known one another long enough to be competing coaches for their kids' athletic teams. While Noel has

been selling apparel, Schaul has been following him to buy apparel for business.

Meanwhile, Schaul and Timmerman met one another as partners at Express Employment Professionals.

"Deno mentioned doing apparel on



## DISTRICT 20 SUPPLY CO.

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**Opened:** 2020

**On the web:**  
www.district20supply.com

his own," Schaul said. "We (all) met mid-March of 2020. We started two weeks later and officially opened in August of 2020."

After overcoming the challenges of getting a business off the ground during a

Continued on page 15

### IN HIS WORDS

"I'm very aware of what the younger generation brings to this business. "Without their ideas and input, District 20 would not be growing at the rate we're growing. I want all employees to 'own' their department and find out ways to make it better and more efficient. And with the group currently on hand, they have done so."

**Dennis "Deno" Noel, co-owner, District 20**



District 20 got its start in August 2020.



District 20's co-owners attribute some of its success to the business's efficiency: orders often are shipped within five days.

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global pandemic and then seeing life slowly return to normal, District 20 shifted from supplying uniforms mostly for sports teams to finding a 50/50 balance between sports teams and businesses in the region.

“We supply uniforms to a youth football team in Woodbury, Minn.,” Schaul said. “We go where our relationships are. Customer service is huge (for us).”

While it’s not terribly surprising to hear business owners claim that customer service is a priority, there isn’t always follow-through with that sentiment. District 20’s three heads, though, have natural dispositions to create strong customer relationships. And they see that customer satisfaction is the end result of their company culture.

“We’re pretty efficient, often ahead of due dates,” Noel said. “As owners, we care about our employees and have to provide them with the best equipment.”

It’s a sentiment borne out by two facts. First, when they began discussing the idea of starting a business, they already had 10 people wanting to work with them. Sec-



Quinton Weidemann loads an embroidery machine.

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Ella Noel stacks newly screen printed shirts at District 20.

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and, their warehouse space soon needed to expand from 7,500 square feet to nearly 10,000 based on customer orders. Employee retention and increased sales are telling markers that they are on the right track, they said.

“We have 75 years of combined experience (among those in the company),” Timmerman said. “And we’re becoming more recognized in the community.”

To get to this point, though, they had to contend with the warehouse space that was in rough condition and with just a few samples of their work. But they worked through

it and using what they had so they could get going.


“It was a complete transformation,” Timmerman said.

District 20 keeps busy each day using top-of-the-line machinery that allows employees to keep orders moving along. Despite busy workdays, though, the owners make sure that the team still has a healthy work-life balance.

“I’m very aware of what the younger generation brings to this business,” Noel said. “Without their ideas and input, District 20 would not be growing at the rate we’re growing. I want all employees to ‘own’ their department and find out ways to make it better and more efficient. And with the group currently on hand, they have done so.”

The quality of their product is possible with a screen printing press that fits numerous screens and with an embroidery machine that handles seven items at a go. And, a second press will soon join the orig-

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inal. Another major piece of machinery is a large, gas conveyor dryer that sets the images. The workflow is surprisingly fast.

“Most orders will take 10 minutes to complete,” Noel said. “Larger orders take about 35 minutes.”

Because of this efficiency, orders come in one day and are out within five days. Employees attend to the details of making sure each individual order within a larger one has a bag with the recipient’s name, making it easier to sort. But there are also details in the embroidery and screen prints that employees emphasize to ensure a quality and personalized final product.

In fact, the final products of a couple of recent team shirts proved that the details matter — images of faces were clear and tiny lettering was legible.

Once apparel travels through the warehouse and gets sorted, Noel said that they personally deliver orders within a 30-mile radius. It’s one of the reasons that customers keep coming back, ensuring that the business grows.

“When someone has a positive experience, we hear from those they talk to,” Timmerman said.

And the word keeps spreading. Along with another screen printing press, they



Alex Maher removes shirts from a screen printing machine at District 20.

expect to grow out of their space in order to keep up with demand.

And it all comes back to having a strong,

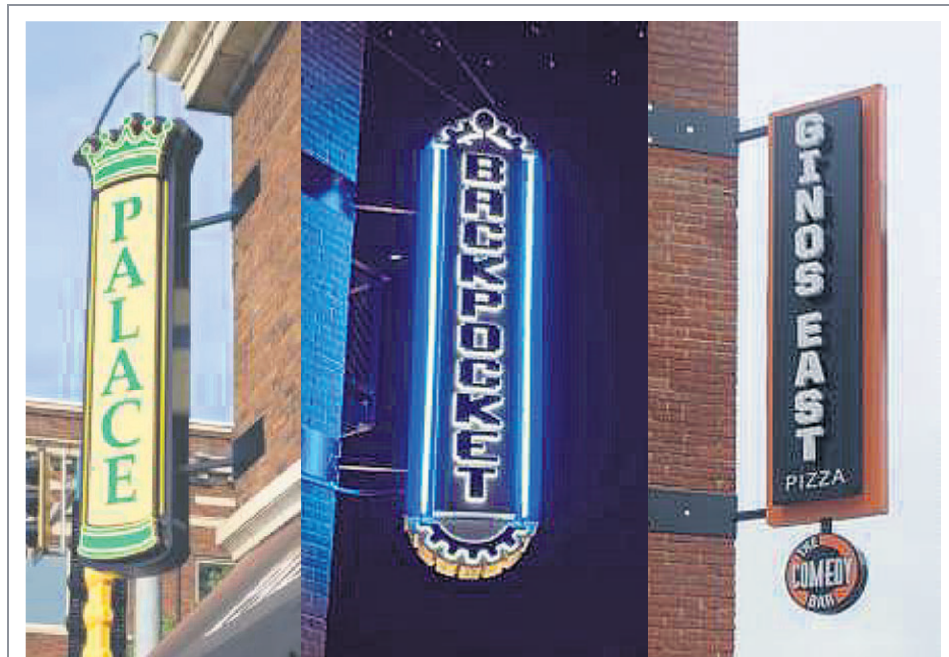
dedicated workforce.

“To me, it’s extremely important that the employees have an opportunity to be heard,” Noel said. “I tell them at every meeting that everyone that works at District 20 is an owner, and what they have to offer is just as important s the next employee.”

**IN HIS WORDS**

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**Dennis “Deno” Noel, co-owner, District 20**



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# Faces in I

## Theresa Caldwell

Executive Director, Dubuque Food Pantry

BY KEN BROWN • PHOTOS BY JESSICA REILLY

**T**heresa M. Caldwell is a lifelong resident of Dubuque. From 1993 until 2016, she owned and operated Son Made Cleaning Service. In October 1997, she purchased the home she grew up in.

She serves on the Steeple Square Board of Directors, as well as Dubuque Area Congregations United. She has one son, a daughter-in-law, a granddaughter and a grandson who live in Epworth.

**Tell us about your field and what attracted you to it.**

In 2007, I was nominated to become a board member for the Dubuque Food Pantry. I served for 8½ years. Then I applied for the manager position in 2016 when the manager retired. I enjoyed filling in for her and thought I'd like to do the job full time.



# Business

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**Are there a person or people who have had a tremendous impact on you?**

Former and present board members who have believed in me and my ability to lead have affected me greatly.

**Do you have any advice for young people and/or new graduates?**

My advice to young people is to find out what things make you feel fulfilled and add your natural God-gifted talents to it. And you will love your job.

**Is there a story or an anecdote that illustrates your philosophy either in life or in your chosen field?**

The very first grant that I ever wrote was in August of 2016. I was contacted by a foundation that asked why I did not submit a grant request. I asked when it was due and she said, "At midnight tonight." I wrote the grant and had it in on time. Two weeks later, three of their board members walked into the Dubuque Food Pantry and handed me a check for the total request.

**What have you found to be the most valuable resource for learning? Are you an on-the-job learner or do you prefer another way?**

I really am an on-the-job learner. Growing the Dubuque Food Pantry has been very rewarding.

**Math vs. creativity. People person vs. introvert. Slow and steady vs. quick and nimble. Where do you fall on those divides? Do you believe there even is a divide?**

Each day is different at the DFP. It's been a walk of patience being in the lead, as I am continually looking at how we can grow and reach the underserved, sustainably.



Theresa Caldwell (from left), executive director at Dubuque Food Pantry, talks with Sister Pat Farrell and Sister Nancy Meyerhofer at the facility in Dubuque.

**When you think of the future, what kind of changes would you like to see in your field? In the broader world?**

When I think of the future. I'd like to see more nonprofits do what they do best, instead of trying to do everything.

**How has your professional life helped you grow as a person?**

I have seen some of our most vulnerable members of our community for many years. It helps me have more compassion and empathy for others.

We recently had a woman who had been homeless with her three children for three weeks. She just got a place to stay and had

**ONLINE**

Visit [biztimes.biz](http://biztimes.biz) for a video interview with Caldwell.

no food. She burst into tears five times as I took her shopping. She got numerous hugs from her 2-year-old daughter. And her and her mom got a couple hugs from me, too. I love my job.

**How do you strike a work/life balance?**

I try to make sure that I am doing things that I enjoy when outside of work.

## IN HER WORDS

I have seen some of our most vulnerable members of our community for many years. It helps me have more compassion and empathy for others.

# How the SECURE acts could impact your business



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Americans, as a whole, aren't saving nearly enough for retirement. In recent years, this has become a growing concern of Congress.

In response, federal lawmakers passed and President Donald Trump signed into law the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act of 2019. Then, in December 2022, lawmakers passed and President Joe Biden signed into law SECURE Act 2.0. These laws introduce additional provisions intended to improve retirement outcomes for Americans. But what is the impact on companies?

Perhaps the most overlooked change of the SECURE Act of 2019 is the change in the counting methodology for determining the 100-participant threshold for "small" plans. Small plans — those with fewer than 100 participants — are not required to obtain an annual audit.

In the past, an employee was counted if they were eligible to participate in the plan even if they did not actively make contributions and have an account balance. The new regulations only count those individuals who have account balances within the plan. As a result, we likely will see a decrease in the number of companies who require an audit for the 2023 plan year.

The intent of this change was to reduce the financial burden for small plans and encourage more small employers to offer workplace retirement options.

Meanwhile, language in the SECURE Act 2.0 expands the eligible pool of employees. The provisions include:

- Plans adopted on or after Dec. 29, 2022, will need to automatically enroll new participants at a rate of at least 3% starting in 2025 and auto-escalate their contributions. This means that as soon as the employee is auto-enrolled in the plan, they will count as a participant with an account balance.

- Effective in 2024, plans no longer will be able to exclude participants who work fewer than 1,000 hours during a plan year. Instead, any employee who works more than 500 hours in three consecutive plan years will

need to be offered participation in the plan. That threshold will be reduced to two plan years in 2025. Again, that likely will increase the number of participants with account balances.

Given that the pool of eligible employees might increase in the next two to three years, companies still might consider having an audit conducted for 2022 if they anticipate that they will meet the audit requirement when the SECURE Act 2.0 provisions become effective.

The new laws also allow companies to adopt new plan capabilities, which are meant to enhance retirement outcomes for participants.

They also could present opportunities for companies competing for employees. You might consider implementing:

- A match to employees on their reported student loan repayments. For purposes of determining the employer matching contribution, student loan repayments would be treated as elective deferrals.

- Allowing employees to choose if they would like to treat employer contributions as tax-deferred or as Roth.

- Emergency savings accounts as an extension of the 401(k) plan. Contributions to the account would be after tax and could include both employee and employer contributions. The account would be capped at \$2,500, and withdrawals could be

taken for any reason and be available to the participant monthly.

In the current economic climate, where nearly every company faces employment shortages, new or expanded retirement plan offerings could be a key in setting your business apart with job seekers.

## ASHLEY SAYS

Perhaps the most overlooked change of the SECURE Act of 2019 is the change in the counting methodology for determining the 100-participant threshold for "small" plans. Small plans — those with fewer than 100 participants — are not required to obtain an annual audit.

# Becoming a ‘good leader’ isn’t always the path you expect



**MATT  
JAHN**  
Stonehill  
Communities

He is Director of Health Services at the Dubuque institution

I started my health care career as a certified nursing assistant at Stonehill, led by a desire to help people and make a difference. While working at Stonehill, I continued my education and became a nurse.

After a year as a staff nurse, I became a part-time supervisor and within another year had become the assistant director of nursing. In this role, I transitioned to a different way of helping people with a greater focus on staff development, training and care planning. But I loved getting to interact more with the staff and having a broader impact on the organization.

Now, for the past seven years, I have been able to take that even further in my role as director of health services (director of nursing), seeing opportunities for change and driving change.

Early in my career, I believed that I had a vast understanding of what constituted a “good leader.” I believed that others wanted and needed me to be knowledgeable about every aspect of my role within the organization, possess the ability to successfully complete every project and enforce every policy to a T.

Little did I know that the foundational aspects of leadership were not exactly what I had envisioned.

A few years prior to the pandemic, our organization began focusing on our “culture” and “leadership development.” I place the quotes around these words because my work experiences up until then had not intentionally revolved around these concepts. I had failed to fully recognize how my interactions and decisions as a leader directly correlated with our organization’s ability to establish a culture of collaboration, leadership and quality service.

That culture has proved invaluable. Without the intentional efforts of having these vital discussions and team-building exercises, our team’s ability to manage the pandemic together would have been nearly impossible. The roller coaster of emotions and the need to respond to rapidly changing information was more than most people — including health care workers — were prepared to handle. Fortunately, I have the privilege to work alongside a team of professionals who face challenges with confidence, trust in each other’s strengths

and recognize opportunities to achieve the greatest success together.

As I grew in my leadership role, I realized my team never needed me to know everything, to do everything and to rigidly interact with them. My team wanted me to be simply be myself — someone who strives to be fair (but understanding), communicates (but to the point), makes decisions (but seeks counsel from others) and is approachable (to be able to build upon personal relationships).

## MATT SAYS

I have learned that being a “good leader” is someone who adapts and changes to the needs of those around us. It is sometimes being successful and sometimes failing and always learning from mistakes.

I have learned that being a “good leader” is someone who adapts and changes to the needs of those around us. It is sometimes being successful and sometimes failing and always learning from mistakes. It is understanding that I do not direct by making decisions, but by mobilizing and motivating the team to get them excited about their part in advancing our mission and providing the highest quality services.

Along my leadership journey I have had the benefit of leadership training that provided new insights and helped me benchmark my skills. But even more importantly, I have had leaders and mentors who encouraged me to think through and apply the concepts I learned in training, to try new approaches and to evaluate the results.

I now see my primary purpose in serving as a leader to others is to help cultivate an environment where my colleagues understand how their contributions toward the

mission, vision and values of our organization drive the greatest results. Oftentimes it is not the big decisions, but the small ones, that get us there. By dedicating time to building relationships with the foundational components of trust, respect, support, collaboration and open communication we will see the effects of shared purpose, vision and loyalty ripple out into the workplace.

The leadership journey is not necessarily a clear or easy pathway to navigate, nor is there a true endpoint. Things are always changing and I will never know all the answers. But I know I can be effective as a leader as long as I continue seeking opportunities to understand what is important to others: Show kindness and grace and keep learning from the challenges, the successes and the people around me.

# Superstition vs. good habit: They might be less different than you think



**KATHY  
ROTZ**  
Unity  
Consulting

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

In 2010, The New York Times published an article titled, “Does Lucky Underwear Improve Athletic Performance?” The article is about how “Michael Jordan wore the same under-shorts from his national-championship-winning University of North Carolina days under his Chicago Bulls uniform. Serena Williams won’t change her socks at tournaments she’s winning.”

The article accuses these athletes of being superstitious. Are intentional practices superstitious or good habits?

In early May, my family is participating in a half marathon and 5K race in northern Wisconsin. For the past three years, I have been following a consistent running routine. However, this is my first organized race. The anticipated stress of the number of people participating and the competitive spirit of the event is creating anxiety for me.

During the preparation of the event, to combat my fears, I am creating control, including wearing the same outfit during every conditioning run, eating the same foods before each run and running at the same time every day. I don’t want any surprises at the event, so I am trying to replicate exactly what I will do on race day.

Isn’t this the same thing Michael Jordan and Serena Williams did during their events? Continue doing what is working so that during the stressful game or match, they are not thinking about how a different pair of underwear or socks are fitting. Their uniform is one less decision to make and one less detail to focus on. They know what works, so why change it?

What good habits do you have in your workday? Do you have a system when you get to work and log into your computer? Or maybe your system isn’t to turn on your computer immediately when you get to work. Maybe you use this time for valuable thinking projects or professional development.

In his book, “Atomic Habits,” James Clear defines a productive system called “habit stacking.” A habit is a “recurring, often unconscious pattern of behavior that is acquired through frequent repetition.” The benefit of

a healthy habit is the efficient use of thought and energy. You don’t need to think about the route you’ll take home from work because it is ingrained in your memory. You don’t waste time reviewing maps, considering options or making U-turns.

To habit stack, you need to find an existing, successful habit and then choose another action to stack on top of the original behavior. I have stacked the “pick up mail” habit on top of my “drive home” habit. Once I reach my neighborhood, my car automatically stops at the mailbox to retrieve the day’s deliveries.

To take this system a step further, habit stack for a reward. After performing the stacked habit on top of the original habit, choose a third habit as your reward, such as a 15-minute walk, sitting down or standing up at your desk or working on a project you’re excited about.

An example of a healthy “habit stack with a reward” could be your above-mentioned morning routine. Consider what you do when you arrive at your desk. Most people log into their computers, open the email application and answer unread emails. This process could consume one to two hours of your morning. Instead, log into your computer, spend the next hour working on a project that is often procrastinated, then open email and reply to messages.

Use email as a reward after a project is complete. How good will you feel to have a looming project completed during the first hour of your day?

When should we intentionally create a new habit or habit stack? When we choose a new goal and are challenged to implement it.

I chose to implement the above morning routine years ago when I was frustrated with how much time I spent catering to emails. By habitually stacking the email task after a project, I spent less time in email throughout the day and was more productive.

No one can convince me to change my morning routine because I have found great success in this habit. Why would I change a good system that brings me success? Or am I just superstitious?

## KATHY SAYS

A habit is a “recurring, often unconscious pattern of behavior that is acquired through frequent repetition.” The benefit of a healthy habit is the efficient use of thought and energy.



# Stock Market Insights: 2023 recession



**DR. RICHARD BAKER, AIF**  
Fervent Wealth Management

He is founder and executive wealth advisor

“Your exit is in two miles, and you will want to be in one of the right two lanes.”

It’s taken my wife and me 26 years, but we finally figured out it’s best if navigation is involved. She needs to drive, and I watch the maps. She’s a 10 but directionally challenged.

In traveling and investing, it’s nice to have a navigator telling you what’s ahead. A mild recession is coming, and you might want to make some adjustments.

### A RECESSION IS COMING

The Federal Reserve recently released the March 21-22 meeting minutes. Though the last few weeks of Fed speeches signaled there would be no recession, surprisingly, they said behind closed doors that they project “a mild recession starting later this year, with a recovery over the subsequent two years.” At least, they say it will be a mild recession.

A recent Wall Street Journal survey of economists put the odds at a 61% chance of a recession in the next 12 months. So, as your financial navigator, listen to me when I say there is a short stretch of bumpy roads coming, and you need to make some strategic adjustments.

Now would be a good time to review your investment goals and rebalance your portfolio if it is out of balance with your preferred risk level. Are you in too risky of stocks? Maybe not enough in lower-risk bonds?

This morning I lowered the risk in the portfolios I manage by pulling back on small-cap and emerging market stocks and added more to large-cap growth and large-cap value stocks. I believe these trades resulted in a slight decrease in risk to my clients and put them in a good place to take advantage of opportunities.

When I was younger, I was

prone to drive through the median and find some remote back road to get around traffic. Now that I’m a little more “seasoned,” I realize I usually didn’t save any time and ran the risk of damaging my vehicle.

While it’s tempting to take to the median and get out of the market at every sign of a rough patch, don’t. You will never consistently time the market. The odds of getting out of the market at precisely the right time and then getting back in the market at precisely the right time are nearly impossible.

Prepare for rough patches in both your portfolio and your mental expectations. Rough patches are always part of the market cycle. Instead of fretting about them, be on the hunt for low-cost stock and bond investing opportunities.

I read a great quote last night in the book, “The Boys in the Boat” about the U.S. rowing team that won the Olympic gold medal in 1936. This quote refers to the physical toll of being a competitive rower, but I think it also speaks to us about rough patches in investing.

“It’s not a question of whether you will hurt, or of how much you will hurt. It’s a question of what you will do, and how well you will do it, while pain has her wanton way with you.” — Daniel James Brown.

I now am the navigator in our family because I don’t get emotionally rattled when decisions need to be made quickly. Unemotional driving decisions have greatly improved our travel regardless of how smooth or bumpy the road is.

If we have a mild and short recession, how you respond to it will affect your investments more than the recession itself.

Have a blessed week.

*Fervent Wealth Management is a financial management and services entity in Springfield, Mo. Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a registered investment advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC.*

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*The economic forecast outlined in this material may not develop as predicted and there can be no guarantee that strategies promoted will be successful.*

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# Afraid of AI? The startups selling it want you to be

**BRIAN  
MERCHANT**  
Los Angeles  
Times

He is the Technology  
Columnist at the  
business institution

You've probably heard by now: AI is coming, it's about to change everything, and humanity is not ready.

Artificial intelligence is passing bar exams, plagiarizing term papers, creating deepfakes that are real enough to fool the masses and the robot apocalypse is nigh. The government isn't prepared. Neither are you.

Tesla founder Elon Musk, Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak and hundreds of AI researchers signed an open letter this week urging a pause on AI development before it gets too powerful.

A cottage industry of AI hustlers have taken to Twitter, Substack and YouTube to demonstrate the formidable potential and power of AI, racking up millions of views and shares.

The doomscroll goes on. A new York Times columnist had a series of conversations with Bing and wound up afraid for humanity. A Goldman Sachs report says AI could replace 300 million jobs.

AI doomsaying is absolutely everywhere right now. Which is exactly the way that OpenAI, the company that stands to benefit the most from everyone believing its product has the power to remake — or unmake — the world, wants it.

OpenAI is behind the buzziest and most popular AI service, the text generator ChatGPT, and its technology currently powers Microsoft's new AI-infused Bing Search engine, the product of a deal worth \$10 billion. ChatGPT-3 is free to use, a premium tier that guarantees more stable access is \$20 per month, and there's a whole portfolio of services available for purchase to meet any enterprise's text or image generation needs.

Sam Altman, the chief executive of OpenAI, declared that he was "a little bit scared" of the technology that he is currently helping to build and aiming to disseminate, for profit, as widely as possible.

OpenAI's chief scientist Ilya Sutskever said last week that, "At some point it will be quite easy, if one wanted, to cause a great deal of harm" with the models they are making available to anyone willing to pay. And a new report produced and released by the company proclaims that its technology will put "most" jobs at some degree of risk of elimination.

Let's consider the logic behind these statements for a second: Why would you, a CEO or executive at a high-profile technology company, repeatedly return to the public stage to proclaim how worried you are about the product you are building and selling?

Answer: If apocalyptic doomsaying about the terrifying power of AI serves your marketing strategy.

AI, like other, more basic forms of automation, isn't a traditional business. Scaring off customers isn't a concern when what you're selling is the fearsome power that your service promises.

OpenAI has worked for years to carefully cultivate an image of itself as a team of hype-proofed humanitarian scientists, pursuing AI for the good of all — which meant that when its moment arrived, the public would be well-primed to receive its apocalyptic AI proclamations credulously, as

scary but impossible-to-ignore truths about the state of technology.

OpenAI was founded as a research nonprofit in 2015, with a large grant from Musk, a noted AI doomer, with the aim of "democratizing" AI. The company has long cultivated an air of dignified restraint in its AI endeavors. Its stated aim was to research and develop the technology in a way that was responsible and transparent.

The blog post announcing OpenAI declared that, "Our goal is to advance digital intelligence in the way that is most likely to benefit humanity as a whole, unconstrained by a need to generate financial return."

For years, this led the press and AI scientists to treat the organization as if it was a research institution, which in turn allowed it to command greater levels of respect in the media and the academic community — and bear less scrutiny.

In 2019, the company transitioned to a "capped" for-profit company, while continuing to insist its "primary fiduciary duty is to humanity." This month, however, OpenAI announced that it was taking the formerly open source code that made its bots possible private. The rationale: Its product (which is currently available for purchase) was simply too powerful to risk falling into the wrong hands.

OpenAI's nonprofit background nonetheless imbued it with a halo of respectability when the company released a working paper with researchers from UPenn last week. The research, which, again, was carried out by OpenAI itself, concluded that "most occupations" now "exhibit some degree of exposure" to large language models like the one underlying ChatGPT. Higher-wage occupations have more tasks with high

exposure. And "approximately 19% of jobs" will see at least half of all the tasks they are comprised of exposed to LLMs.

These findings were covered dutifully in the press, while critics, like Dan Greene, an assistant professor at University of Maryland's Information Studies College, pointed out that this was less a scientific assessment than a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Whether or not OpenAI set out to become a for-profit company in the first place, the end result is the same: The unleashing of a science fiction-infused marketing frenzy unlike anything in recent memory.

Now, the benefits of this apocalyptic AI marketing are twofold. First, it encourages users to try the "scary" service in question — what better way to generate a buzz than to insist, with a certain presumed credibility, that your new technology is so potent it might unravel the world as we know it?

The second is more mundane: The bulk of OpenAI's income is unlikely to come from average users paying for premium tier access. The business case for a rando paying monthly fees to access a chatbot that is marginally more interesting and useful than, say, Google Search, is highly unproven.

OpenAI knows this. It's almost certainly betting its lon-

## BRIAN SAYS

The doomscroll goes on. A new York Times columnist had a series of conversations with Bing and wound up afraid for humanity. A Goldman Sachs report says AI could replace 300 million jobs.

Continued on page 27

## Continued from page 26

ger-term future on more partnerships like the one with Microsoft and enterprise deals serving large companies. That means convincing more corporations that if they want to survive the coming AI-led mass upheaval, they'd better climb aboard.

Enterprise deals have always been where automation technology has thrived — sure, a handful of consumers might be interested in streamlining their daily routine or automating tasks here and there, but the core sales target for productivity software or automated kiosks or robotics is management.

And a big driver in motivating companies to buy into automation technology is and always has been fear. The historian of technology David Noble demonstrated in his studies of industrial automation that the wave of workplace and factory floor automation that swept the 1970s and 1980s was largely spurred by managers submitting to a highly pervasive phenomenon that today we recognize as fear of missing out, or FOMO. If companies believe a labor-saving technology is so powerful or efficient that their competitors are sure to adopt it, they don't want to miss out — regardless of the ultimate utility.

The great promise of OpenAI's suite of AI services is, at root, that companies and individuals will save on labor costs — they can gener-

ate the ad copy, art, slide deck presentations, email marketing and data entry processes fast, for cheap.

This is not to suggest that OpenAI's image and text generators are not capable of interesting, amazing or even unsettling things. But the conflicted genius schtick that Altman and his OpenAI coterie are putting on is wearing thin.

If you are genuinely concerned about the safety of your product, if you seriously want to be a responsible steward in the development of an artificially intelligent tool you believe to be ultra-powerful, you don't slap it onto a search engine where it can be accessed by billions of people. You don't open the floodgates.

Altman argues that the technology needs to be released, at this relatively early stage, so that his team can make mistakes and address potential abuses "while the stakes are fairly low." Implicit in this argument, however, is the notion that we should simply trust him and his

newly cloistered company with how best to do so, even as they work to meet revenue projections of \$1 billion next year.

I'm not saying don't be nervous about the onslaught of AI services — but I am saying be nervous for the right reasons. There's plenty to be wary about, especially given the prospect that companies most certainly will find the sales pitch alluring and whether it works or not, a lot of copywriters, coders and artists are suddenly going to find their work not necessarily replaced, but devalued by the ubiquitous and much cheaper AI services on offer.

But the hand-wringing over an all-powerful "artificial general intelligence" and the incendiary hype tends to obscure those nearer-term types of concerns. AI ethicists and researchers like Timnit Gebru and Meredith Whittaker have been shouting into the void that an abstract fear of an imminent SkyNet misses the forest for the trees.

## BRIAN SAYS

Whether or not OpenAI set out to become a for-profit company in the first place, the end result is the same: The unleashing of a science fiction-infused marketing frenzy unlike anything in recent memory.



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### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: A Community Conversation on Transportation



Stephen Gassman

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion event took place on April 12.



Panelists answer questions during a community conversation on transportation at Steeple Square in Dubuque.



John Deere Dubuque Works General Manager Mark Dickson speaks during a community conversation.

### RIBBON CUTTING



Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce

National Alliance on Mental Illness Dubuque, 225 W. Sixth St.

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### BUSINESS AFTER HOURS



Members of Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce chat during the event, which took place April 18.



Statera President and CEO Nicole Hutchinson (left) chats with employees and guests.



Stephen Gassman

Guests gather during Business After Hours at Statera Integrated Health and Wellness Solutions in Dubuque. The next event is scheduled for Tuesday, May 16.

### COMPASS TO CARE BREAKFAST BENEFIT



Jessica Reilly

Nicole Thulen speaks during the 10th annual Compass to Care breakfast benefit at Grand River Center in Dubuque.



Michelle Ernsdorff-May speaks during the breakfast benefit, which took place April 19.

### DAYS OF CARING



Melissa Leick (left) and Fran Simon, with McGraw-Hill, clean up around the St. Mark Youth Enrichment Center during the annual Days of Caring event held April 28.



Carnegie-Stout Public Library employee Arius Burns carries a load of mulch to be placed around the building.

John Deere Dubuque Works volunteers work on putting mulch around the Carnegie-Stout Public Library.



U.S. Bank employees Michelle Reidy (left) and Janet Schauff clean up around the St. Mark Youth Enrichment Center.

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**TELEGRAPH HERALD**

**HIRED:** Brandi Myers as a customer service representative and receptionist.

**HIRED:** Reese Miller as advertising sales coordinator.

**HONKAMP, P.C.**

**HIRED:** Alex Pfohl as a staff accountant and Dustin Kass as content director.

**MEDICAL ASSOCIATES**

**HIRED:** Certified physician assistant Larissa Mormann joined the family medicine department.

**UNIFIED THERAPY SERVICES**

**PROMOTED:** Paige Hentrich has been promoted to head of physical therapy at its Elm Street clinic in Dubuque.

**F&M BANK**

**APPOINTED:** Bill Havertape to its board of directors.

**COMMUNITY FIRST BANK**

**APPOINTED:** Executive vice president Kevin Raisbeck to its board of directors.

**MEDICAL ASSOCIATES**

**HIRED:** Jon Klett as director of sales and marketing.

**THEISEN'S HOME-FARM-AUTO**

**HIRED:** Jeff Mentzer as chief financial officer.



Adelmund Dunkel Sentovich VanOstrand Kemp

**MERCYONE DYERSVILLE MEDICAL CENTER**

**HIRED:** Renee Scheitzach joined as a nurse practitioner.

**FINLEY HEALTH FOUNDATION**

**HIRED:** Kristie Asay as director of development. In her new role, she will be responsible for major gift fundraising, planned giving and grants.

**PROMOTED:** Tonya Reicher to development specialist. She previously served as foundation coordinator.

**COTTINGHAM & BUTLER**

**HIRED:** Taylor Rupp as mail center associate.

**HIRED:** Carter Holmes as quality assurance coordinator.

**HIRED:** Cassandra Jacobs as account administrator.

**HIRED:** Tyler Kraft as financial analyst.

**HIRED:** Megan Duvick as graphic designer.

**HIRED:** Leeza Klocke as client service representative.

**HIRED:** Callie Ahlborn as implementa-

tion specialist.

**HIRED:** Sierra Elliott as claims coordinator.

**HIRED:** Jacob Niehaus as sales executive.

**HIRED:** David Groves as sales executive.

**HIRED:** Casey Miller as client services representative.

**HIRED:** Robin Smith as condition management account coordinator.

**HIRED:** Tiffany Roling as WC RN case manager.

**HIRED:** Rachael Rellihan as WC RN case manager.

**HIRED:** Aaron Huseman as a claims representative.

**HIRED:** Megan E. Kuennen as a condition management account coordinator.

**HIRED:** Terra S. Adelmund as a benefits services assistant.

**HIRED:** Carmen L. Dunkel as an account administrator.

**HIRED:** Thomas J. Sentovich as a sales executive.

**HIRED:** Morgan VanOstrand as a brokerage claims coordinator.

**HIRED:** Lillian Kemp as a claims coordinator.





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Miller



Briggs



Mast



Mausser



Middendorf



Oberbroeckling



Wohrley



Barton



Wilson



Diaz



Morgan



Mulgrew



Siegworth

**HIRED:** Cassandra Anderson as a quality assurance coordinator.

**HIRED:** Ethan M. Gaulke, Taylor J. Stark and Ashley Markoff as claims representatives.

**HIRED:** Anna Demkier as a client service representative.

**HIRED:** Nancy Gao as a member services coordinator.

**HIRED:** Sean D. DeVries as a financial analyst.

**HIRED:** Alannah P. Walker as an executive assistant.

## MERCYONE DUBUQUE MEDICAL CENTER

**APPOINTED:** Collins Eboh, of the City of Dubuque, and Tim English, of O'Connor & English Insurance Agency in Dubuque and English Insurance Agency in Dyersville, Iowa, to its board of directors.

## ORIGIN DESIGN

**HIRED:** Tasha Peacock as an administrative assistant

## RILEY SUBARU

**HIRED:** Taylor Merfeld, Tyler Reinhardt and Ashley Ostrander as sales consultants

**HIRED:** Sara Miller as an office manager

## DUTRAC COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

**PROMOTED:** Justin Briggs to information technology operations manager

**PROMOTED:** Hunter Mast to assistant branch manager of the Asbury Road branch

**PROMOTED:** Wionnia Mausser to accounting operations manager

**PROMOTED:** Kati Middendorf to assistant branch manager of the St. Mary's branch

**PROMOTED:** Matt Oberbroeckling to financial services consultant at the Asbury Road branch

**PROMOTED:** Carly Wohrley to branch manager of the Peru Road branch

## MEDONE PHARMACY BENEFIT SOLUTIONS

**PROMOTED:** Danielle Barton and Nick Wilson to directors of account management.

**PROMOTED:** Denise Diaz to lead business analyst.

**PROMOTED:** Kate Morgan to director of clinical review.

**PROMOTED:** Grace Mulgrew to data entry supervisor.

**PROMOTED:** Andrea Siegworth to pharmacy technician III.

**PROMOTED:** Ashleigh Durbin to clinical pharmacist II.

## MOUNT PLEASANT HOME

Elected officers for the 2023-2024 year:

**Lois Pearce** as president.

**Pat Judge** as first vice president.

**Margie Breese** as second vice president.

**Greg Rehmke** as assistant recording secretary.

**Frank O'Connor** as treasurer.

**Robin O'Connor** as corresponding secretary.

**Michelle Breitbart** as immediate past president.



Durbin



McClintock

## HOME + FLOOR SHOW

**HIRED:** Ben McClintock as assistant furniture manager.

## BODINE ELECTRIC

**HIRED:** Marcie Buss as a flexible employee in the assembly department.

**HIRED:** Jonah Sannito as a flexible employee in the structural department.

**HIRED:** Jake Sannito as a flexible employee in the shaft department.

**PROMOTED:** Matt Digmann to senior tool and die maker.

**PROMOTED:** Lucas Knief to set up and operate A in the structural department.

**PROMOTED:** John Venema to set up and operate B in the shaft department.

**PROMOTED:** Austin Hoftender to set up and operate C in the shaft department.

**PROMOTED:** Alex Klein to set up and operate B in the gear department.

# Don't make the same mistake as SVB with your 401(k)

ALLISON  
SCHRAGER  
Bloomberg  
Opinion

She is a columnist  
covering economics  
at the Manhattan  
institution

The poor risk management at Silicon Valley Bank is stunning. But what went wrong is actually pretty common. There is often confusion about what makes a safe asset versus a risky one, and guessing wrong is often at the core of financial blow-ups. Safe assets, as we properly define them, are the backbone of financial markets. They are how we price and measure risk.

But knowing what makes an asset safe is not always so simple, and it will differ based on circumstances. Odds are you have the wrong safe asset in your retirement portfolio right now.

We tend to think of government bonds as safe. They are liquid, meaning you can sell them pretty easily and quickly. Debt-ceiling theatrics aside, it's a safe bet the U.S. government won't default on them. This is why bank regulation considers these assets to be low-risk. But depending on your financial situation, not all bonds — even U.S. government ones — will be safe.

Silicon Valley Bank offers us all a cautionary tale. It had short-term liabilities, or deposits, which it financed with long-term debt — Treasuries and mortgage-backed bonds. The issue wasn't liquidity since it's easy to sell a U.S. Treasury to raise cash. The problem was that the value of the Treasuries fell when rates went up. Longer-term bond prices move a lot when rates rise or fall, while the value of the bank's liabilities (the deposits) didn't change — and suddenly all their depositors wanted their money. All banks have a similar mismatch with their assets and liabilities, but the nature of Silicon Valley Bank's deposits, which were

large, mostly uninsured and mostly from tech firms that would need their money once interest rates increased, made it especially risky.

In hindsight, this was obviously terrible strategy. Not only because the bank doubled down on its bet that rates would stay low, but that it made this bet when interest rates were at record lows, which were never going to last.

But to be fair, no one can predict the future, and it had been a long time since bond prices fell by a large amount. Bond prices had been trending up for the past 40 years. It had become a widely held belief that we had entered a new era of forever-low yields and if rates did go up, they wouldn't rise by too much. Perhaps some people assumed that the introduction of Quantitative Easing as a policy meant the Federal Reserve was committed to keeping the entire yield curve low forever — this seemed like a reasonable assumption based on Fed policy during the past 15 years.

Pension funds in the U.K. also bet on low rates forever, and we'll soon find out who else did, too, because a changing rate environment reveals where all the bodies are buried. If you assume rates will stay low forever, short- and long-term bonds are almost interchangeable from a risk perspective. They appear equally safe, with the only obvious difference being that longer-term bonds offer slightly more yield.

The reality is that predicting interest rates is hard and

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there are no guarantees. And whether long-term or short-term bonds are safe depends on the nature of your liabilities. The only safe strategy is to hedge interest-rate risk by, for example, buying bonds with a similar duration as your liability.

Hence Silicon Valley Bank needed to shorten the duration of its asset portfolio. For SVB, short-term debt like 3-month or 1-year Treasury bills (or interest rate swaps to get the same effect), whose value doesn't change much when rates go up, would have been the safe asset. It would have sacrificed some yield in exchange for the lower risk of more stable prices.

If you are saving for retirement, you face the opposite problem. Short-term assets are your bigger risk. Your liability is the need to finance spending in your retirement. This is a long-term liability, as you can expect to live at least 15 years after you retire.

So think of the money you'll spend in retirement — let's say \$50,000 per year protected from inflation. Financing this is comparable to issuing a long-term bond that pays out \$50,000 (with an inflation adjustment) per year for 15 years. So if you want to ensure that you have \$50,000 to spend in each of those 15 years, you can buy a bond portfolio that has the same duration: It will make \$50,000 inflation-adjusted payments to you each year no matter what happens to interest rates.

Two years ago, a bond with this duration

**ALLISON SAYS**

The reality is that predicting interest rates is hard and there are no guarantees. And whether long-term or short-term bonds are safe depends on the nature of your liabilities.

would have cost about \$803,000. Last week it cost \$665,000, almost 20% cheaper. That might seem good now, since the rising bond yields essentially made future spending cheaper. Here's another way to look at it: Suppose you saved \$803,000 and used that money on day one of your retirement to buy a bond that would finance your spending for the next 15 years. Two years ago that money would buy you \$50,000 in annual inflation-protected income, but with recent bond yields, that same amount of money would buy \$60,000 per year. Your income went up because interest rates have gone up.

But here's the thing that so many people overlook: Rates also might go down in the future — or move up and down more frequently. Investing in short-term bonds amounts to not hedging your risk, and leaves people vulnerable to big swings in retirement income, sometimes good, other times bad.

The problem is that in the retirement industry, short-term bonds are considered the

safe asset because their prices are stable. Many savers invest their retirement account in target-date funds, which move your portfolio into short-term bonds as you approach retirement to ensure your asset balance stays steady. The thinking goes that you can then take out a fixed percent each year. But this strategy means much lower returns (less income), more risk and no inflation protection. Most people can't afford that choice, and it's extremely risky in today's inflation environment.

So if you want safety and predictability, you need to hedge risk and invest in longer-term inflation-protected bonds before and then during your retirement. Unfortunately, the odds are we still haven't learned this lesson. In part because retirees came out ahead this time when rates went up, even though that might not be true in the future.

Such is the nature of risk. And it shows why it's easy to misjudge what is risky and what is risk-free — and why hedging is so valuable.

**BIZ LOCAL**

**MERCYONE EMPLOYEE RECEIVES NURSING AWARD**

**Megan Webber**, clinical specialist and nurse residency program coordinator at MercyOne Dubuque Medical Center, recently was awarded the 2023 Learning Facilitator Award by the Association for Nursing Professional Development.

**MERCYONE RECEIVES AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE**

Divine Word College, of Epworth, Iowa, presented MercyOne Dubuque Medical Center and MercyOne Dyersville Medical Center with its 2023 Donaghey Award for Outstanding Service.

**HOEPER EARNS MASTER CODE PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION**

The City of Dubuque announced that combination inspector **Shane Hoeper** earned the Master Code Professional designation from International Code Council. Master Code Professional is the highest level of certification awarded by the ICC, and fewer than 1,000 code professionals worldwide have achieved the designation.

**CISCO SYSTEMS RECOGNIZES INSTRUCTOR**

Cisco Systems, Inc. recognized **Aaron Holverson**, a Network



Webber



Hoeper



Holverson



Giese

Specialist instructor at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, as a Cisco Network Academy Expert Level Instructor.

**UD INDUCTS 2 INTO FACULTY HALL OF FAME**

The University of Dubuque inducted the following into its Faculty Hall of Fame for Excellence in Teaching and Advising:

Kevin Cattani, professor of sport marketing and management. He was also recognized with the 2023 John Knox Coit Prize.

Richard W. Smith, assistant professor of physics, was also presented with the 2023 William L. Lomax Award.

**JIM GIESE RECOGNIZED**

Jim Giese Commercial Roofing Was recognized as an Elevate Master Contractor for exceeding industry standards in installation, quality of work and customer service. **Daniel Giese** is the current owner.

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# Kiss the Ground explores Indigenous origins of regenerative agriculture



Contributed

Nonprofit Kiss the Ground has released an animated short, “Possibilities of Regeneration.” The film explores Indigenous origins of regenerative agriculture.

## WIRE SERVICES

LOS ANGELES — Kiss the Ground, a 10-year-old environmental nonprofit leading voice in bringing awareness to regeneration through its storytelling, education and advocacy, has announced the launch of its newest slate of premium and short form programs.

In celebration of Earth Day, they are launching, “Possibilities of Regeneration.” This educational animated short offers a journey that reminds people of their role in stewarding and protecting the earth and asks: if we expand the regenerative mindset beyond farming, what else is possible?

“Possibilities of Regeneration” explores the indigenous origins of regenerative agriculture, offering a story that is both new and ancient in its roots. Co-written and narrated by Lyla June Johnston, an Indigenous pub-

lic speaker, artist, scholar and community organizer, the film takes a holistic approach to regenerative stewardship, expanding the idea of regeneration beyond the principles popularized in the relatively young movement.

“While the modern-day regenerative movement has gained attention over the last decade as a viable solution to reverse our climate and wellness crisis, it is currently gaining exponential momentum,” said Evan Harrison, CEO of Kiss the Ground. “As such, now is the optimal time for history to be front and center of the narrative. ‘Possibilities of Regeneration’ ... showcases the power of regenerative agriculture and how humans can lead and positively impact our planet. In celebration of Earth Day and beyond, our stories aim to educate, inspire individuals and companies to join the movement and help create a healthier, more regenerative

future.”

At approximately five minutes long, the film was animated by Emmy- and Annie-Award animation director Jason Carpenter and his team. The film is co-written and produced by the team of Lyla June Johnston, Kate Oliva and Karen Rodriguez, of Kiss the Ground.

“This project is important because so much of the history of indigenous peoples on this land has been distorted,” Johnston said. “A lot of the understanding of indigenous foodways has been reduced to this label of hunter-gather, when in fact, indigenous peoples were active cultivators and gardeners of entire bio-regions. This film is highly important because it is the first time the true story of the grandeur of our food system is being appropriately animated in a beautiful way and properly told using high production quality standards.”

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