

COLUMN

Investing in
your health
starts now

PROFILE

**SpecCast
Collectibles**
marks 50 years
in business



GOING BACK TO BASICS

Tackling inflation
stress in the
grocery aisle and
personal finance

**NOMINATE
TODAY!**



AWARDS EVENT: JUNE 26, 2025 | DIAMOND JO

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

In recognition of our esteemed and accomplished professionals aged 60 and above, we invite nominations from colleagues, family members, and friends.

This initiative aims to commend outstanding achievements, and we will present the Savvy Over 60 award to five distinguished professionals in the Tri-State region.

TelegraphHerald.com/Savvy

Closes Friday, March 14

TH MEDIA
Connecting our Community

bizTIMES_{biz}

March 2025
Volume 33, Issue 7

ON THE COVER



Photo illustration by Anthony Frenzel

COLUMNS

- Investing in your health starts now
Mallory Kaiser 26
- China's AI star DeepSeek shook basic
patterns of high tech *Evan Ramstad* . 27
- Lawsuit no help to man who loses
\$1,987 in online theft *Dave Lieber* 28
- Emerging opportunities in international
stocks *Richard Baker* 29

DEPARTMENTS

- Snapshots 16
- People 30
- Look, Listen, Learn 32

ON THE WEB

For daily business news and updates,
go to www.biztimes.biz
For the Twitter feed, go to
[@biztimes.dbq](https://twitter.com/biztimes.dbq)

Focus on the necessities

Inflation was one of the hot-button topics of 2024, and going into the first quarter of 2025, it continues to be — especially when it comes to the grocery aisle.

The Associated Press reported that, at a January meeting, the Federal Reserve was taking a cautious stance as inflationary pressures continue to be stubbornly high. Wholesale prices were reported as being up .4%, much hotter than expected.

But what does that mean for those of us on the ground as we shop, save and plan for the future?

For some expert insight into how to keep your family healthy,



Megan Gloss



Anthony Frenzel

happy and above water, turn to page 4.

NEXT MONTH

April is Financial Literacy Month, and a great time of year to brush up on your money skills. We'll be taking a look at what you need to know about planning for the future.

Have a story idea?

Interested in writing for BizTimes?

Email megan.gloss@thmedia.com and tony.frenzel@thmedia.com.

FEATURES



Keeping inflation at bay 4



Faces in Business: Leslie Shalabi 9



Collectible firm marks 50 years in business 10

CONTACT US

Megan Gloss
Managing Editor
563-588-5638
megan.gloss@thmedia.com

Anthony Frenzel
Managing Editor
563-588-5679
tony.frenzel@thmedia.com

Mike Fortman
Publisher
563-588-5740
mike.fortman@wcinet.com

Andy Kamentz
Advertising Account Executive
563-588-5699
andy.kamentz@thmedia.com

bizTimes.biz
P.O. Box 688

Dubuque IA 52004-0688
www.bizTimes.biz

bizTimes.biz (USPS 008-963, ISSN 2165-3968) is published monthly by the Telegraph Herald, a division of Woodward Communications Inc., 801 Bluff St., Dubuque, IA 52001-4647. Periodicals postage paid at Dubuque, IA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: bizTimes.biz, PO Box 688 Dubuque, IA 52004-0688. Send address changes to bizTimes.biz, PO Box 688, Dubuque IA 52004-0688.

Submitted articles and columns reflect the views of the writers and not necessarily those of bizTimes.biz. Copyright, bizTimes.biz, 2025. All rights reserved. Reproduction or use of editorial or graphic content without permission is prohibited.



Going back to basics

Tackling inflation stress in the grocery aisle and personal finance



Photo illustration

BY ANGELA JONES

Inflation is that elusive but ever present economic condition that affects us all, whether affluent or struggling. And while we are feeling the pressure of high inflation, we might not be making necessary personal finance decisions to relieve some of that pressure.

Collectively, we've been accustomed to buying what we want when we want it, even if we have to use high-interest credit, causing more financial pressure. For the most part, though, each of us can turn our thinking around to get through the mire.

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

BUY GROCERIES WITH THE MOST NUTRITION WHEN INFLATION IS HIGH

No doubt we have all felt the painful pinch of higher grocery prices, and if we plan to bring lunch to work more often or have dinner at home, then it's also necessary to focus on the most nutrition within a given budget.

Kristie Jacobsen is nutrition manager at MercyOne, and she stresses that it's time to go back to basics. Her suggestions below include the things many of us know we should be doing but might not when we're too busy, stressed or exhausted.



Kristie Jacobsen

"When grocery shopping, have your meal plan handy and stick to it," Jacobsen said. "And don't go to the store hungry or thirsty, because you will buy things you don't mean to buy."

Those unintended things could include too many processed items or foods that are too expensive or out of season, which are usually priced higher. Ultimately, the goal is to make the most nutritious decisions within your budget.

IN HER WORDS

"When grocery shopping, have your meal plan handy and stick to it. And don't go to the store hungry or thirsty, because you will buy things you don't mean to buy."

Kristie Jacobsen

"Good nutrition includes variety, so not the same things every day," she said. "Include all of the food groups."

Jacobsen emphasized that for fruits and vegetables, buy those that are in-season, but also buy frozen or canned alternatives, too, because the "nutrients are intact" and they're also budget-friendly options.

When buying meat, Jacobsen recommends buying in bulk since the price ends up being lower overall, and then freezing portions until ready to use. For protein, too, buying "dried beans, peas, nuts" for instance is budget friendly.

"Eggs, too, are very healthy but expensive right now," Jacobsen said. "But (learn about) farms that sell farm-fresh eggs, which are less expensive."

Finally, keep waste at a minimum by not buying highly perishable foods unless you know you'll use them in your meal plan

right away, she cautions. And, just as with personal finance, plan ahead.

"I can't stress enough how important it is to plan ahead," she said, and that includes both for shopping and for making several meals to keep frozen.

Daily meal plans, too, should combine foods for the most nutritional punch. For instance, Jacobsen recommends that if cereal is for breakfast, be sure to add milk and a banana, or for lunch, to use leftover meat with whole grain bread and perhaps cottage cheese with peaches or homemade soup. (The soup might have come from your freezer after making and dividing a batch of it.)

In short, plan ahead and remember variety.

Continued on page 6





Metro Creative

Continued from page 5

BACK TO BASICS BUT WITH A TECHNOLOGICAL TWIST

One surprising way to plan meal variety within a budget is to use ChatGPT. Amanda Reynolds, assistant professor of social work at Loras College, started using the app this way and finds it useful.

“For my family, I say (to ChatGPT): ‘Please create a budget under \$100. I would like to focus on whole foods when possible and protein. Create a meal plan and shopping list.’”

Reynolds finds that using this tool not only creates the list, but helps to reduce “decision fatigue” that can drain mental



Amanda Reynolds

energy. When starting to use ChatGPT for the task, though, it’s necessary to go through a little trial and error, but it does narrow down some options.

“Often it’ll give me a budget on food groups ... and tell me things like ‘spend \$25 on protein’ and (it provides) some examples. When I go to the grocery

store, I can think about food groups; as in the meat aisle, I can see what deals there are and build from there.”

With so many things that families juggle, especially when it comes to everyday tasks, using technology for assists can be a

valuable way to best use time and manage spending.

Overall, whether planning for your future or for your week during high inflation, the message is the same: Make a plan and stick to it. But also consider how best to reward yourself for following through with it, whether by going on a weekend trip or splurging on a dessert.

High inflation might mean keeping a closer eye on finances, but it doesn’t have to mean higher stress — it’s possible to feel good about saving money, enjoying nutritious meals, and getting a little creative along the way.

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

KEEPING PERSONAL FINANCES IN LINE WITH INFLATION

Chris Noel, financial planner and managing partner at Bridgewater Advisors in Dubuque, says that whether someone is nearing retirement or just getting started in a career, the approach to dealing with inflation is similar.



Chris Noel

“When it comes to financial planning (when inflation is high), focus on what you can do right now,” Noel said.

For those who invest, it’s as necessary as ever to diversify your portfolio.

“Blue chip companies are good during these times because of dividends,” Noel said. “But your choices should reflect the risk you’re willing to take while taking emotions out of it.”

Of course, the world of personal finance extends beyond investments, and financial

Continued on page 8



Metro Creative

IN HIS WORDS

“It takes some planning because it’s necessary to identify your spending habits whether you’re well off or just starting out. Everyone should be putting guardrails around how they spend their money.”

Chris Noel



608-204-7050

Maximize Your Marketing Impact with Conway Media Solutions

Dream big, achieve more, and grow your business without the sticker shock. Conway Media Solutions has been helping businesses across Wisconsin and the Midwest exceed their marketing goals for over 20 years. Let CMS make your media work harder for you—so you can focus on what matters most: your bottom line.



Contact CMS Today!

RESEARCH • STRATEGY • PLANNING • BUYING • POSTING • ANALYSIS

8 Cover Story

Continued from page 7

planners also can help evaluate spending habits and recommend courses of action.

“It takes some planning because it’s necessary to identify your spending habits whether you’re well off or just starting out,” Noel said. “Everyone should be putting guardrails around how they spend their money.”

While spending habits differ widely from person to person, there are some fairly common things to review.

“Check your automatic payments, like for streaming services. If there’s one you don’t use, cancel it. If you haven’t used the gym membership, cancel that, too,” Noel said. “Make sure you shop around for auto and home insurance, that (can be) a big bonus.”

Essentially, evaluate all of your “unused services” to keep that money with you. There are also large appliance or vehicle purchases, for instance, as well as general

credit card purchases and payments that may mean too big of a drain on finances for now.

“If you’re looking at a big purchase now, with interest rates high, it might be best to wait,” Noel said. “If possible, do priority maintenance.”

These sorts of purchases often come with payment plans that increase debt load, as does making everyday credit card charges.

“Credit card debt is at an all-time high, so basic budgeting becomes more important. Try to pay down debt rather than add to it by paying variable debt first; pay higher percentage cards first,” Noel said.

Clearly, all of the practical steps we’ve likely heard about since first starting out on our own are in play during high inflationary times. Setting and following a budget might not be the most thrilling thing to do, but it can bring peace of mind.

“It’s necessary to avoid short-term, instant gratification,” Noel said. “There’s no

bizTimes.biz, Dubuque, Iowa, March 2025

stigma in not going out to eat all of the time. If you’re accustomed to (that), consider cutting back to twice a week. But it’s not about changing your lifestyle; it’s about thinking of ways that changes can still fit your lifestyle.”

Making more helpful decisions doesn’t necessarily mean denying yourself the things you want to buy or experience, though.

“It’s not easy to save,” Noel said. “Give yourself a reward. If you want savings to get X amount, then take a weekend away or get new golf clubs (for instance) when you reach that goal. If you want to make a bigger purchase, keep up a picture of what you want — it sounds quirky, but it helps you to know your priorities.”

In short, the first steps to take are to evaluate where your money is going (especially with automatic payments), to tackle high interest credit card debt first, and avoid impulse buying, including bringing lunch to work more often than not.



DUBUQUE AREA
CHAMBER

BUILDING

A Robust Business Climate

STRENGTHENING

The Local Economy

ADVOCATING

For a Better Dubuque

TH MEDIA
MIKE FORTMAN
TH Media



JOE WINTERS
KCRG

MidWestOne
Bank
MIKE FITZPATRICK
MidWestOne Bank

Q
CASINO + RESORT
BRIAN RAKESTRAW
Q Casino + Resort



Where Business Belongs

563.557.9200 | WWW.DUBUQUEChamber.COM



Small replicas, big success

Dyersville farm-equipment collectible firm
SpecCast marks 50 years in business

BY ERIK HOGSTROM

DYERSVILLE, Iowa — Amanda Schwartz has watched SpecCast Collectibles grow into a source of agriculture-related collectibles that boasts supporters across the globe.

“SpecCast has been doing a great job of listening to their customers and making what (the collectors) want in their collections,” said Schwartz, museum manager of Dyersville’s National Farm Toy Museum and an organizer of the biannual farm toy shows held at several venues around town.

SpecCast’s intricately detailed collectibles have helped make Dyersville a magnet for people who collect replica tractors, trucks, wagons, planters and other pieces of agricultural implements.

“It’s amazing how people come from all over the world to this little town in Iowa (for collectibles),” Schwartz said.

SpecCast marked its milestone 50th anniversary in 2024.

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10

During the past five decades, the company has been transformed from an Illinois-based firm that produced belt buckles and medallions to a Dyersville-based producer of agriculture-equipment replicas in 1:16 and 1:64 scale.

“It’s just been a very popular thing to do,” said Dave Bell, SpecCast’s president.

The history of SpecCast begins in 1974, with the founding of the company in Rockford, Ill.

“They made belt buckles and a variety of specialty things that a customer would want made, like medallions,” Bell said. “Once in a while, they would cast (a replica) in pewter for a customer who had a certain product they wanted made.”

Bell, who grew up on a farm west of Dyersville, purchased SpecCast in 1986. Bell had built a career in toys. He spent 13 years at The Ertl Co., a farm-toy giant once based in Dyersville. Bell served as a vice president at Ertl, where his role included licensing and negotiating contracts for products related to NASCAR and “The Dukes of Hazzard” television show.

Ertl launched a line of collectible tractor replicas, and a show for collectors was held for the first time in 1977. The construction of National Farm Toy Museum eventually followed.

While working at Ertl, Bell met Ernie Jackson, the owner of SpecCast, at an agriculture show. Jackson told Bell that SpecCast was for sale.

“It sounded like a good investment to

Continued on page 12

IN HIS WORDS

“We started doing pewter replicas of tractors and trucks and other ag products, which turned out to be very successful.

As we went along, we bought a die-cast machine and did some of our die-casting for awhile.”

Dave Bell, SpecCast’s president



Erik Hogstrom

Dave Bell, 79, of Dyersville, is the president of SpecCast Collectibles. The company marked its 50th anniversary in 2024.

Relax, we've got you covered

LANG E
SIGN GROUP

815-747-2448
www.langesign.com

adno=419757

Continued from page 11

buy," Bell said.

Bell purchased SpecCast and kept it in Rockford until 1987, when Bell moved the company to a facility in an industrial park in north Dyersville.

"My brother (Ken Bell) ran the business over in Rockford for me," Bell said.

Once Dave Bell brought SpecCast to Dyersville, he expanded its focus.

"We started doing pewter replicas of tractors and trucks and other ag products, which turned out to be very successful," Bell said. "As we went along, we bought a die-cast machine and did some of our die-casting for awhile."

Bell had left Ertl to lead SpecCast, but he maintained a good relationship with Ertl officials.

"I didn't want to compete with Ertl," Bell said. "They were making toys and I didn't want to get into the toy business like they were in."

Instead, Bell thought SpecCast could address different consumers from the ones who were purchasing toys.

"I felt there was a position in the market for highly-detailed (replicas) of farm equip-



SPECCAST COLLECTIBLES

President: Dave Bell

Founded: 1974

Employees: 8

Address: 1637 15th Ave. SE, Dyersville, Iowa

Phone: 563-875-8706

Online: Speccast.com

ment," Bell said.

SpecCast became known for its exacting standards for small replicas of large equipment.

"Back then, we would go out and take pictures of (equipment) and get all the dimensions (before producing a replica)," Bell said. "Now, farm-equipment companies send us their CAD (computer-aided design) files and we use those to develop the products (we make)."

SpecCast products are produced overseas and shipped to Dyersville, where the company distributes them across the globe.

"We do a lot (of business) in the United States and Canada," Bell said. "In Europe,

they're more into 1:32 scale (replicas), which we don't do."

Still, SpecCast replicas have been sold and shipped to Europe as well as Australia and South America.

Bell said he doesn't keep tabs of the numbers of units sold annually.

"I never add them up but I know we sell many thousands (of replicas annually)," he said.

SpecCast spent 34 years on the north side of Dyersville. The company moved to its present location on 15th Avenue Southeast

Continued on page 13



SpecCast Collectibles produces 1:16- and 1:64-scale replicas of tractors and other agriculture-related equipment.

Continued from page 12

on Nov. 1, 2023.

“I had 25,000 square feet up there (at the former SpecCast location) and we didn’t need that much room and I wanted to get everything into one location,” Bell said.

The SpecCast facility houses a warehouse as well as the company’s administration, sales, marketing and design departments.

Bell, 79, said he has no immediate plans to retire.

“I have a good staff here, and my daughter Carmen (Bell) owns a little bit of the business,” he said.

Bell also has no plans for SpecCast to leave Dyersville.

“I can be anywhere in the world that I want to, but I love Dyersville and the people of our community,” he said.

Schwartz said she relies on Bell’s vast expertise when organizing Dyersville’s toy shows and maintaining the city’s farm toy museum.

“Dave had a pedigree of working at Ertl and then starting his own company,” she said. “He has a lot of history in his brain that I try to tease out for the farm toy museum.”

Erik Hogstrom writes for the Telegraph Herald. Email him at erik.hogstrom@thmedia.com.



SpecCast stores inventory at its warehouse in Dyersville.



SpecCast Collectibles produces replicas of agriculture-related equipment using photographs of vintage equipment and CAD (computer-aided design) files.



Personalized Health Coaching Just for You!

At Stonehill Communities Wellness Center, we believe in a healthier you. Our new Health Coach works one-on-one with you to create a plan tailored to your fitness, nutrition, and overall wellness goals.



Mallory Kaiser
Health Coach

Become a Member Today! Join Stonehill Communities Wellness Center and take the first step toward a healthier, happier you! For more information, visit stonehilldbq.com

**Service Exclusive to Members.*

3485 Windsor Avenue | Dubuque, Iowa 52001 | 563.690.9640

stonehilldbq.com   

Faces in Business

Leslie Shalabi

Co-Founder and executive director of
Convivium Urban Farmstead

BY KEN BROWN

Leslie Shalabi is co-founder of Convivium Urban Farmstead, a Dubuque-based nonprofit organization based on the idea of creating community around food. A lifelong lover of food and entertainment, she is dedicated to helping people find ways to connect through the universal languages of food and hospitality.

Shalabi was born in Sauk City, Wis., and is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she earned a double major in journalism and anthropology. Her career began in the publishing world, where she worked with trade magazines in the construction industry, eventually transitioning to a leadership role as a partner in an international public relations firm.

After 20 years in the corporate world, Shalabi made a significant career shift to pursue her passion for food and community. This led to the founding of Convivium Urban Farmstead, where she now channels her energy into improving people's lives through food.

Convivium's mission is to improve life through food. Located in the North End of Dubuque in two, large renovated greenhouses, Convivium accomplishes its mission through classes spanning all aspects of the food cycle — from seed starting to cooking to composting; demonstrations, such as small-scale gardening techniques and community mapping; and experiences, like eating in the restaurant or taking a garden tour. Convivium opened to the public in March 2017.

Residing on the farmstead with her two dogs, Roscoe and Pip, she enjoys leading a vibrant organization by day and sitting in with rock bands at night.



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

The early part of my career I was a journalist and then transitioned to corporate marketing. What drew me to those fields was the ability to help people connect to each other or topics of interest through stories. Now in my current role as co-founder and executive director of Convivium Urban Farmstead, I am helping connect people through food.

How has your field changed in the time you've worked in it? How have you adapted?

I am going to speak specifically about Convivium here. This has been a singular experience for me and our team. There aren't really any organizations that do everything we do — restaurant, event space, community gardens, culinary and gardening education, nutritional support through our casserole program. I feel like we are constantly adapting and figuring things out. How to bring the most value to our customers, how to make the most impact in the community with limited resources, how to fundraise. I have a saying here: "If plan A doesn't work, we have the whole rest of the alphabet to go!" There are some instances we've make it to plan R or S — but we eventually figured it out.

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

My father. He was a remarkable person. He immigrated to the United States in 1962 from Palestine with a suitcase of clothes and a few hundred dollars in his pocket. He literally traveled here on a boat. In addition to perseverance and joie de vivre, he taught me to treat every single person I meet with kindness and respect — regardless of station in life.

I have a very vivid memory of a deaf man

DO YOU KNOW THE NEXT PERSON TO BE FEATURED?

Do you know someone with an interesting perspective? Is there someone in your organization who has a compelling story to tell? Let us know and they could be featured in a future edition of Faces in Business. Email tony.frenzel@thmedia.com and megan.gloss@thmedia.com with your suggestions.

from my little hometown in Wisconsin. This man was always a bit disheveled and ambled around town "talking" to himself, by gesturing in sign language.

Frankly, as a child I was a little afraid of him. But one time, I saw my dad walk up to him and the man pulled out a small notebook and my dad and he proceeded to have a written conversation with each other. I was astounded. This was a frequent occurrence, my dad told me afterwards.

He encouraged me to think about how lonely that man must be without anyone to talk to. That sort of regard for the unseen or disregarded people in our lives has always stuck with me and informs a lot of the work I do today with Convivium.

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

If plan A doesn't work, you have the whole rest of the alphabet! This is a solution-based approach to life and helps people access their grit, resilience and problem-solving skills. The path between "not knowing" and "knowing" is not a straight line. It is filled with twists, turns and frustrations. And guess what? That's exactly what learning feels like. So stick with it!

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

When I first started working in the "real world" my dad told me: Find the hole and fill it. He meant find the places in your organization that need help, refining or that your superiors are struggling with and find a way to be a solution to those problems. That has served me very well through the years.

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?

Definitely on-the-job training. There are obviously some professions that require specific academic training, but mostly we learn the specifics of a job while we are doing that job.

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?

There are these divides, for sure. But there are very few of us who are firmly in one camp or the other and I would put myself in that category. Especially as I get older and see that most things in life fall into a gray area.

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

More connection, less divisiveness.

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

I have worked a long time to get to the point in my life where there isn't much difference between my personal and professional life. Each informs the other. See above.

How do you strike a work/life balance? What's that?**IN HER WORDS**

I feel like we are constantly adapting and figuring things out. How to bring the most value to our customers, how to make the most impact in the community with limited resources, how to fundraise. I have a saying here: "If plan A doesn't work, we have the whole rest of the alphabet to go!" There are some instances we've make it to plan R or S — but we eventually figured it out.

Ribbon cutting



NuEra Cannabis, 20170 U.S. 20 W., East Dubuque, Ill.

Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce

The Right Vehicle for the Right Job

CHEVROLET **GMC**
BUSINESS ELITE

Shop our inventory at RundeAutoGroup.com

RUNDE
AutoGroup.com

\$1 billion plan to fight high egg prices

BY OLIVIA M. BRIDGES

WASHINGTON — The Agriculture Department said it will spend \$1 billion to tackle the bird flu in a campaign to address soaring egg prices that appears, in a departure for the administration, to acknowledge the importance of imports to keep prices down.

The USDA said it will use the Commodity Credit Corporation to provide the funding to address a virus that has sickened 138 flocks in the past 30 days. The aid will include \$500 million for biosecurity measures, \$400 million for economic relief to farmers and \$100 million for vaccine research.

The department said its five-pronged strategy would also look at removing regulations on chicken and egg producers. The plan includes encouraging consumers to raise their own chickens and removing animal welfare regulations such as those in California that add to the cost of eggs.

"American farmers need relief, and American consumers need affordable food. To every family struggling to buy eggs: We hear you, we're fighting for you, and help is on the way," Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said in a statement.

Rollins described the strategy on The Wall Street Journal op-ed page.

"We also want to make it easier for families to raise backyard chickens," she wrote in the op-ed.

Egg prices have surged as a result of the outbreak. Retail egg prices rose nearly 14% in January 2025 and are 53% higher than in January of last year, the USDA's Economic Research Service said in its February 2025 Food Price Outlook. It estimated that egg prices will increase by 41% in 2025.

"We are looking at temporary import-export options to lower consumer prices," Kailee Tkacz Buller, the USDA's chief of staff, said in a phone briefing to lay out the plan.

Buller said the department is in talks with other countries.

"Turkey is already a country that we import from, and they've already made a commitment to give us more items than they normally have. Usually they give us about 70 million, and we're anticipating them this year to give about 420 million," Buller said.

The Trump administration has thus far dismissed inflation risks as the president has slapped a range of tariffs on goods or put in motion efforts to do so. But the avian flu strategy includes a recognition that more eggs, including imported ones, can keep prices down.

The USDA will not be subsidizing private purchases of eggs, Buller said.

"We really want to encourage consumers who have homegrown eggs in their backyard, we want to relinquish regulatory burdens on them, and we really want to work with Con-

gress to potentially come up with a fix on Prop 12 as it relates to states like California who do have much higher eggs than other folks in the nation due to their state policies," Buller said.

California's Proposition 12 bars the sale of eggs in the state unless the producers meet the state's standards to house the chickens.

The USDA also said that it will partner with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to identify ways to safely expand the commercial egg market.

The five-pronged strategy also includes expanding the biosecurity assessments to ad-

dress the spread of bird flu through wild birds, which the USDA says account for 83% of cases. The assessments will be conducted nationwide but will begin with egg-layer facilities.

Farmers impacted by bird flu can continue to get free biohazard audits, but nonaffected farms will now also be able to get them. The USDA said 20 epidemiologists will be part of the assessments and audits.

The department also said that it will cover 75% of the costs to fix biosecurity concerns based on the assessments and biosecurity audits.

DOWNTOWN DUBUQUE

Modern Class A Workspace

FOR YOUR BUSINESS





- **Prime Location:** Near restaurants and a newly developing childcare center
- **Beautifully Renovated:** Historic building w/ modern amenities
- **Flexible Space:** Customizable from 2,000-14,000 SF
- **Abundant Natural Light:** 3rd Floor space w/ great views
- **Convenience:** Ample off-street parking included, handicap accessible, and shipping/receiving dock

SCHEDULE A VIEWING TODAY!

Contact **AMY WAGNER** at
(563) 588-5685 or
awagner@wcinet.com

or Scan
QR Code



Telegraph Herald First Citizen Award



Stephen Gassman

William Intriligator, recipient of the 2024 Telegraph Herald First Citizen Award, speaks during a reception at Diamond Jo Casino in Dubuque.



Scan the code to see more pictures at:
<https://biztimes.biz/category/galleries/>

Have photos you'd like to submit? Go to:
<https://biztimes.biz/biztimes-photos/>

Telegraph Herald First Citizen Award



TH Media Publisher Mike Fortman speaks during the ceremony.



The First Citizen Award reception was held at Diamond Jo Casino on Jan. 28.



Telegraph Herald Executive Editor Amy Gilligan speaks during the ceremony.



NEW 6,600+ SQUARE FEET OF FLEXIBLE EVENT SPACE
 STATE-OF-THE-ART AUDIO/VISUAL TECHNOLOGY
 CULINARY EXCELLENCE + EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE
 460+ ROUND TABLE SEATING FOR CELEBRATIONS,
 CORPORATE EVENTS, TEAM BUILDING AND FUNDRAISERS

THE BEST EVENTS, ALL IN ONE PLACE.

REFLECTIONS
EVENT SPACES



DIANA SCHULZ
DIRECTOR OF HOSPITALITY SALES
 EMAIL: DIANAS@QCASINOANDRESORT.COM
 PHONE: 563-585-3000



SCAN TO BOOK
YOURS TODAY!

Telegraph Herald First Citizen Award



William Intriligator is the 55th recipient of the First Citizen Award.



Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque President and CEO Nancy Van Milligen speaks during the ceremony.



William Intriligator is the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra music director and conductor.



Past recipient Ernest Jackson congratulates William Intriligator.

Lunch with Leaders



Stephen Gassman

Jennifer Schmidt, city of Galena finance director, speaks during the Lunch With Leaders event hosted by United Service Clubs of Galena (Ill.) at Galena Middle School on Feb. 17.



Grow your business with DuTrac.

Small business is the lifeblood of any community. Continue down the path of profitability with DuTrac's tailored business tools and services.

- Investment property loans
- Commercial real estate loans
- Lines of credit
- Equipment & vehicle loans
- Business credit cards
- Business checking and savings
- Business Money Market Account
- Certificates of Deposit



Contact us to learn more!



TRAVIS PHELAN
 Commercial Lender
 tphalen@dutrac.org
 563.585.8518



(563) 582-1331 | DuTrac.org

Lunch with Leaders



Jennifer Schmidt, city of Galena (Ill.) finance director, speaks during the Lunch With Leaders event.

State of Education



Thomas Eckermann

The Dubuque Area Chamber Commerce hosts its annual State of Education event to discuss the connections between education and workforce development at the Hotel Julien Dubuque on Feb. 7.

State of Education



Dan Butler, of Western Dubuque Schools, speaks during the State of Education event.



Amy Hawkins, of Dubuque Community Schools, speaks during the State of Education event.

MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCY

Grow, scale & thrive your retail business with AIM Point of Sale Software Solutions

A promotional graphic for AIM Mobile software. It features three devices: a smartphone on the left showing a menu, a desktop monitor in the center displaying a dashboard with various buttons, and a tablet on the right showing a login screen. The AIM logo is visible on the monitor and tablet.

celebrating 40th ANNIVERSARY 1984-2024

BEST PLACES TO WORK DUBUQUE • 2024

www.tritechretail.com
800.670.1736

Dubuque County Business Competition

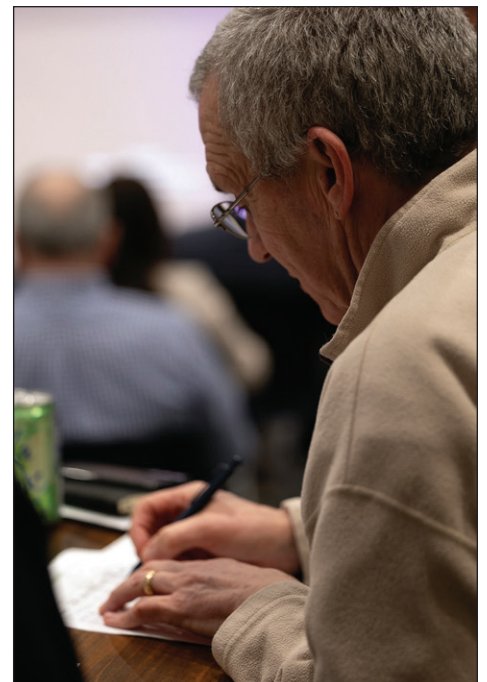


Stephen Gassman

Competitors speak with visitors during the funding fair portion of Dubuque County Business Competition, hosted by Dupaco Credit Union at The Innovation Lab in Dubuque on Feb. 6.



Natalie Ceron, with La Venta Specialty Coffee, makes her pitch during the competition.



Event judge Alex Taylor makes notes during the competition.

**BEST
PLACES
—★TO★—
WORK
DUBUQUE**

2025 RESULTS ARE IN!

Join us to celebrate the Tri-State's Best Places to Work in 2025!

Thursday, April 10

Diamond Jo Casino | Harbor Room

Social Hour 5 p.m.

Dinner 6 p.m.

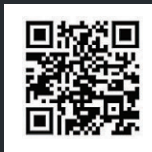
Awards Presentation 6:30 p.m.

Venue Sponsored by:



Tickets: \$75 | Table (10 seats): \$500

★ **DON'T MISS IT! BUY YOUR TICKET TODAY!** ★



Scan the QR Code or visit
telegraphherald.com/bestplacestowork



Presented by:
DUBUQUE AREA
CHAMBER
TH MEDIA
Connecting our Community

Investing in your health starts now



**MALLORY
KAISER**
Stonehill
Communities

She is the
wellness manager
at the Dubuque
organization

We plan for our financial future with career moves, retirement plans, investments and disability insurance to ensure financial security. But what about our long-term health? Just as our retirement accounts and investments benefit from early, incremental contributions, so does our health. Small improvements and habits now can help us protect our health and reduce the risk of more serious chronic illnesses as we age.

Enter the world of health coaching — a growing field designed to help you take charge of your well-being, make sustainable lifestyle changes and ultimately live a healthier, happier life.

Let's talk about coaching. Most of us have had a coach at some point in our lives — whether it was a high school basketball coach pushing us to run one more lap, a career coach helping us land that dream job or even an unofficial mentor guiding us through life's twists and turns. But have you ever considered a coach for your health?

Think of a health coach as your personal wellness guide. They're not doctors, but they work alongside health care professionals to bridge the gap between medical advice and real-life application. A doctor might tell you that you need to exercise more and eat better, but a health coach helps you figure out how to actually do it in a way that fits your lifestyle.

They can help with everything from nutrition and exercise to stress management, sleep and even emotional well-being. It's not about quick fixes or fad diets — it's about creating sustainable habits that support your long-term health goals.

The concept of coaching is universal: someone helps guide you toward achieving your goals. Health coach-

ing is no different from the other types of coaching you might have encountered.

Sports coaches: Just like a basketball coach helps athletes fine-tune their skills and build endurance, a health coach helps you develop better habits and progress in your health journey.

Career coaches: A career coach helps you identify strengths, set goals and navigate obstacles in the professional world. A health coach does the same for your wellness, working with you to identify barriers and create an actionable plan.

Mentors: Many of us have had someone in our lives who guided us with wisdom and support. A health coach acts in a similar role, encouraging you, holding you accountable and celebrating your successes along the way.

Let's be honest — knowing what to do for your health is often easier than actually doing it. How many times have you set a New Year's resolution to eat better or exercise more, only to give up by February? A health coach provides accountability to keep you on track and motivated. They offer personalized guidance based on your goals and lifestyle. They are your cheerleader, offering support and encouragement to keep making positive steps. Your health is your greatest asset. Investing in it today ensures a better quality of life, not just now, but for years to come. Just like financial planning, taking proactive steps with a health coach can help you stay on track and

avoid costly mistakes down the road. If you're ready to take control of your well-being and create lasting, meaningful change, working with health coach can help you put a plan into motion.

MALLORY SAYS

Think of a health coach as your personal wellness guide. They're not doctors, but they work alongside health care professionals to bridge the gap between medical advice and real-life application. A doctor might tell you that you need to exercise more and eat better.

China's AI star DeepSeek shook basic patterns of high tech



EVAN
RAMSTAD
Star
Tribune

He is a business
columnist with the
publication

It's easy to analyze the strategies of high technology businesses if you know this: Hardware is always upgrading and software is always degrading.

The news last month about China's DeepSeek artificial intelligence breakthrough blew away Silicon Valley and investors because it defied this industry norm.

Historically, the improving performance of microchips and other components makes gadgets better. That's why we frequently see new versions of personal computers, smartphones and other devices.

Hardware improvements also allow software developers to build applications with more bells and whistles. However, developers tend to be less efficient when making those improvements.

Lines of code grow. Just as a gas expands to fill whatever space it's in, software programmers find ways to consume whatever processing power they're given.

DeepSeek bucks this phenomenon by performing as well or better than Open AI's Chat GPT for less processing power and less money, though how much less money has become widely debated.

As a result, DeepSeek raised big questions about whether AI will require the huge investments of capital and energy so many people were assuming.

There is at least one other niche of high tech that already defies this hardware-makes-software-takes maxim. It's high-performance computing, the realm of supercomputers and, more recently, exascale computers. There are so few of these computers that there's incentive to use them efficiently.

"It's all about trying to optimize that software," Gina Norling, a 25-year veteran of Minnesota's high-performance computing scene, told me a few days after the DeepSeek news shook the tech scene. "How do we make them run efficiently? And that is the question that I think AI has to ask."

Norling spent more than a decade at Cray Inc. — the pioneering supercomputer maker that Hewlett Packard Enterprise acquired in 2019 — and most recently worked on Cray's involvement in El Capitan, now the world's most powerful computer. Today, she's an executive at Advanced Micro Devices, the chipmaker whose products are the main processors in Cray's machines, including El Capitan.

She contacted me after I wrote a story in 2022 about Minnesota's supercomputing companies. She and others reminded me there are still hundreds of Minnesotans

engaged in high-performance computing work at HPE, other companies and universities.

Last month, she sent me a photo of a few dozen people at the recent dedication of El Capitan, which is a project of the National Nuclear Security Administration and housed at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, California.

"There were two other Minnesotans in the photo," Norling said. "These are the architects and leaders, and we don't represent all of the engineering work that is being done here locally in Minnesota, because there's a lot of Minnesota folks still involved and engaged in software build-out."

El Capitan is reserved for government use. The nation's next-fastest computer, called Frontier at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, is also an HPE product built around AMD chips. Private and academic researchers vie to use it along with government agencies.

"Committees review all the proposals for running applications, and they'll only select a few," Norling said. "Again, it's all about trying to optimize that software."

Even before DeepSeek rolled out the software revision that sparked all the headlines last month, AI software was dropping in price so quickly, analysts and journalists are already calling it a commodity. Open AI, Google and other big developers of AI models have sharply cut the prices they charge to other developers to run data through their models.

The DeepSeek development, an AI model needing less computational effort, is putting downward pressure on the hardware side. That's playing out most visibly in investors' perceptions

of Nvidia, the leading maker of chips used in AI systems.

Nvidia, however, is likely to benefit from an economic principle known as the Jevons paradox: The idea that when a resource becomes more efficient to use, and its price drops, demand will become so high that consumption of the resource will rise.

This effect played out with personal computers in the late 1990s. In 1997, the then-leading maker of PCs, Compaq, started producing its first sub-\$1,000 desktops and laptops, and some investors worried commoditization would hurt PCs. Instead, demand skyrocketed.

We take for granted that technology has become a powerful deflationary force. Look at where gadget and AI pricing is today compared to PCs back then.

The sub-\$1,000 PCs of the late 1990s would be about \$2,000 in 2025 dollars. The AI revolution is playing out on PCs, smartphones and tablets as cheap as \$500.

EVAN SAYS

"It's all about trying to optimize that software," Gina Norling, a 25-year veteran of Minnesota's high-performance computing scene, told me a few days after the DeepSeek news shook the tech scene. "How do we make them run efficiently? And that is the question that I think AI has to ask."

Lawsuit no help to man who loses \$1,987 in online theft



DAVE
LIEBER

The Dallas
Morning
News

He is an investiga-
tive columnist with
the publication

Barry Johnson of Southlake, Texas, woke up one morning in November, went online and learned that he'd been mugged while he was sleeping.

Nobody came up to him and said "give me your money." That's the old-fashioned mugging. This was done through his bank, JPMorgan Chase and the Zelle money payment app.

The retired business executive told me that someone removed \$1,987 from his checking account. He can't get it back.

Because Zelle is involved, I'm not surprised. Federal regulators have sued Zelle's owner, Early Warning Services, and its three owners — Chase, Bank of America and Wells Fargo — contending that the banks did not do enough to protect customers and didn't handle fraud complaints in a meaningful way.

I remember a few years back, I started telling a spokesperson of one of the major banks about a reader's problem. But before I could get the first sentence out, the bank rep asked, "Is this about Zelle?" It wasn't, but his question indicated a larger problem.

Zelle is a major embarrassment to the big bank community. If you don't know, it's an app used to send money to a person or institution at no charge.

The lawsuit argues that Zelle has cost Americans \$870 million in lost money due to theft. But the banks are adamant when they say that number is overblown.

The \$870 million in losses includes people who said they were victims of fraud, but upon further examination the charges turned out to be legitimate.

Johnson, the Texas victim, is one of hundreds of thousands victims. He has fought Chase for weeks, but Chase refuses to help him get his money back.

That's because Chase doesn't believe his story. In a letter from Chase to Johnson, the bank explained that the I.P. address on his computer and its geographical location match his home address, not some criminal's.

That's important to know. Every time you use your banking app, it checks to make sure the contact is coming from your computer or smartphone at your precise address.

Because he can't solve this, Johnson told me, "My blood pressure has gone up."

Who to believe?

Do I believe Johnson, 79, is telling me the truth? Yes, I do.

Do I believe the bank's claim that the transaction was made on his computer at his house? Yes, I do.

That's the conundrum here. I've talked to the bankers and studied their responses. They deny the massive wrongdoing the government accuses them of.

Bill Halldin of Bank of America said that when an unauthorized transfer is made, the bank reimburses the customer for the loss. When customers lose money in a way that they authorized, either knowingly or not, they try to help get the money back. That's a difficult task.

"In 2023, we paid more than \$65 million to customers impacted by fraud and scams, even when funds could not be recovered," he said.

Zelle spokesperson Jane Khodos told The Watchdog that "Zelle leads the fight against fraud and scam protection."

She said that if the lawsuit filed by the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau shuts down Zelle, that will hurt small businesses because it "would take away a valuable, reliable and needed tool for America's Main Street — the backbone of the U.S. economy."

NEW LAWSUIT

What do we learn from the lawsuit's allegations? In Chase's case, according to the lawsuit, the bank allegedly had weak security measures, kept victims in the dark about money recipients and didn't block risky transfers or individuals.

"As a result of its failures Chase consumers and other Zelle users lost hundreds of millions of dollars, the suit contends.

"Chase received hundreds of thousands of complaints about fraud related to Zelle," it adds. Victims were told to report the matter to police (Johnson did) and even tried to get victims to confront the crooks (Johnson is waiting to learn the identity).

Chase spokesperson Brooklyn Bass said regulators are "overreaching" their authority.

"It's a stunning demonstration of regulation by enforcement," she said. "Rather than going after criminals, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is jeopardizing the value and free nature of Zelle, a trusted payments service beloved by our customers."

Suzanne Lynch, a former banker and fraud investigator who teaches about financial crimes at Utica University, told me, "This is a huge, huge issue."

When it comes to reimbursing victims, she said, "It's ultimately up to the bank, and this is where consumers are getting hammered."

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

Rohit Chopra, the bureau's director, gives this take on how this problem became so "huge."

Banks fell behind when digital payment systems like Venmo, CashApp and PayPal grew quickly.

"This competitive threat triggered fear in the boardrooms of big banks. In response they created Zelle," Chopra said in a call with reporters.

But safeguards were not implemented and since they weren't losing money themselves, "they dragged their feet on fixing the problems."

"In case after case, banks routinely denied requests for help, turning a blind eye even when customers provided clear evidence that criminals had taken over their accounts and that the transactions were unauthorized."

DOES LOYALTY COUNT?

Don't think that because you're a longtime customer of an institution you'll get a break.

Johnson told me he paid off his mortgage through Chase. He has two checking accounts and one savings account. He also saves a certificate of deposit through Chase.

None of that matters. What matters is his I.P. address and his geographical location.

As he puts it, "Our fate is in the hands of technology rather than people."

Emerging opportunities in international stocks



DR.
RICHARD
BAKER, AIF
Fervent
Wealth
Management

He is the founder
and executive
wealth advisor

We were at a softball tournament in St. Louis a few years ago when my wife got hit in the head by a foul ball. The sports complex had four fields with a big concession stand in the middle. The foul ball came over the backstop, over the concession stand and hit her from behind. What shocked us was that it didn't come "out of left field" but from a completely different game we didn't even know was being played.

Similarly, international stocks have seemingly come out of nowhere.

International stocks have been the proverbial "red-headed stepchild" of investing. The U.S. stock market accounts for two-thirds of global market value. Further, U.S. stocks have outperformed international stocks in 14 out of the last 15 years, but it might be time to start looking overseas for opportunities.

U.S. stocks are big and have a great track record, but they are expensive when you compare the S&P 500 valuations versus the MSCI EAFE (EAFE stands for Europe, Australasia and the Far East). U.S. stocks, which have been powered by the Magnificent Seven and the Trump victory, have been losing ground for the past few days while international stocks are up. The Euro Stoxx 600 has gained more than 10% year to date compared to the S&P 500's 2% gain.

Those high valuations are great for already invested money but can hinder new money into the market looking for a good return.

The Wall Street Journal reports that the research firm Research Affiliates shows how high stock prices hinder predicted returns in their projections. The lower costs of international stocks can potentially lead international stocks to outperform U.S. stocks in the next decade. Research Affiliates project that non-U.S. large-value stocks could return about 10% yearly in the next 10 years, while U.S. large-growth stocks could gain less than 2% yearly.

Do not read this and sell all your investments and invest in international stocks. International stocks and Europe especially, often find a way to trip themselves up. Though it might be a time to start watching them, and if an opportunity opens up, move a small percentage of your portfolio into foreign stocks.

Here are a few key ingredients that could lead to international stock's outperformance.

- First, U.S. Mag Seven tech giants are pulling down the U.S. market. The Bloomberg Mag Seven Index is -3%

so far this year. The MSCI Europe Index only has a tech sector weighting of 7% compared to 31% for the comparable U.S. index. Those stocks are good when they are good but bad when they are bad.

- Second, the U.S. dollar is down 2% this year, which gives a direct bump to international stocks through currency exchange.

- Third, the possibility of an end to the Russia-Ukraine war has given Europe a boost, particularly on the potential for lower natural gas prices in Europe. This was helped by the agreement a few days ago between the U.S. and Ukraine to develop natural resources jointly.

- Finally, the European Central Bank is expected to continue to cut interest rates, while the U.S. Fed is signaling that they will continue to hold rates fairly high.

These conditions look favorable, but I won't fully trust international stocks in a meaningful way until I see evidence of a sustained turnaround, especially with the high unknowns of tariff risk. I remain neutral on developed international equities, but they have my attention, and I will watch them more closely.

We are a sports family, so we diligently pay attention to the game to avoid getting hit by an errant ball. In this case, no one yelled, "heads up," and no one near us saw it coming because we couldn't see over the building. My wife got a concussion, and we learned that if we were sitting in a blind spot to put up our portable tent.

Hopefully, international stocks don't give any of us a concussion, but maybe they do the opposite; maybe they soften the blow of a lackluster decade.

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.

Opinions are for general information only and not intended as specific advice or recommendations. All performance cited is historical and is no guarantee of future results. All indices are unmanaged and can't be invested in directly.

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

Visit www.ferventwm.com for more information.

RICHARD SAYS

Do not read this and sell all your investments and invest in international stocks. International stocks and Europe especially, often find a way to trip themselves up. Though it might be a time to start watching them, and if an opportunity opens up, move a small percentage of your portfolio into foreign stocks.



Kilburg



Schope



Nytko



Burnes



Knepper



Garcia Lopez



Caldwell



Harmon



Hermesen



Hogan



Caudill



Bryant



Winn



Triem



Schulte



Layer



Miller



Osterhaus



Hoover



Austin



Schlender



Dodds



Takes



Finnegan



Fangman



Decker

MEDICAL ASSOCIATES

HIRED: Kristin Kilburg as an occupational therapist for the physical and occupational therapy department.

HIRED: Jennifer Schope as a dermatologist.

COTTINGHAM & BUTLER

HIRED: Amy Nytko, Joseph Burnes and Claire Knepper to the benefits department as associate client consultants.

HIRED: Nallely Garcia Lopez to the wellness department as a health coach.

HIRED: Christopher Caldwell to the safety department as a safety consultant.

HIRED: Collin Harmon to the national special transportation division as a sales executive.

HIRED: Cody Hermesen to the national special transportation division as an account administrator.

HIRED: Kayla Hogan to the transportation department as an account administrator.

HIRED: Cassie Caudill to the transportation department as a client service representative.

HIRED: Benjamin Bryant to the risk department as a sales executive.

HIRED: Eva Winn to the risk department as a risk administrator.

HIRED: Emily Triem to the risk department as a marketer.

HIRED: Carter Schulte to the administration department as a staff accountant.

MI-T-M CORP.

PROMOTED: Luke Bonert to senior fabrication manager.

ORIGIN DESIGN

HIRED: Josh Layer as a client advocate for its Dubuque office. In his new position, Layer will lead business development efforts in Dubuque and the tri-state area and assist the firm's architects and engineers to identify new projects and clients.

AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

HIRED: Blake Schueller as a junior member.

UNIFIED THERAPY SERVICES

HIRED: Rachel Miller as a certified occupational therapy assistant.

PROMOTED: Katie Osterhaus, Lauren Hoover, Grace Austin and Emily Schlender to clinic coordinators.

LANTERN CENTER

ANNOUNCED: Matt Dodds addition to its board of directors. The center also announced the members of its 2025 executive board: Craig Takes, as president; Faye Finnegan, as vice president; Lynn Fangman, as treasurer; and JoJean Decker, as secretary.

BIZ LOCAL



Prill-Adams

PORK ASSOCIATION RECOGNIZES PRODUCER HONOREE

Wisconsin Pork Association recognized **Alicia Prill-Adams**, of Platteville, Wis., as a Distinguished Service Producer Honoree for her commitment to youth development and education.

CARF INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITS HILLS & DALES

CARF International accredited Hills & Dales, of Dubuque, for three years for Community Employment Services: Employment Supports, and Job Development services; as well as Community Integration, and Community Integration (Autism Spectrum Disorder – Children and Adolescents) services. This is the seventh consecutive accreditation from this body that Hills & Dales has received.

FORBES NAMES BRIDGEWATER ADVISORS TO BEST-IN-STATE LIST

Forbes recognized Bridgewater Advisors, of Dubuque and Bellevue, Iowa, on its list of Best-in-State Wealth Management Teams.

DONOVAN NAMED TOP ADVISOR

Dubuque-based **Kelley Donovan**, of Goldfinch Wealth Management, has been named as one of LPL Financial's top advisors and has been included into LPL Financial Holdings' Ascent Club Program for 2025 in recognition of her achievements in financial guidance.

IOWA PORK PRODUCERS RECOGNIZES LOCALS

Iowa Pork Producers Association recognized the following:

Lindsay Manternach, of the Delaware County, Iowa, board, with a Belle Ringer Award.

Jordan LeClere, of the Delaware County board, with the state Hog Wild Award.

CHARLIE HARTIG RECEIVES RECOGNITION FOR ADVOCACY

Charlie Hartig, of Dubuque, received Iowa Pharmacy Association's 2025 Champion Advocate Award in recognition for his advocacy and support of HF555.

DROESSLER PASSES OPTICIANRY EXAM

Patricia Droessler, of Fuerste Optical, passed the American Board of Opticianry Exam.

EXECUTIVE MOVES



Oishi

OISHI ANNOUNCED AS NEW COO FOR MEDICAL ASSOCIATES HEALTH PLANS

Medical Associates, of Dubuque, announced: **Nicole Oishi** is the new Chief Operating Officer of Medical Associates Health Plans.

Trump antitrust enforcers to keep Biden-era merger rules

BY LEAH NYLEN

The Trump administration's antitrust enforcers will follow Biden-era merger review rules, disappointing critics who had hoped for a rollback of the requirements.

In a memo to staff recently announcing the policy, U.S. Federal Trade Commission Chair Andrew Ferguson said maintaining consistent standards for merger reviews is key for the business and legal community.

"If merger guidelines change with every new administration, they will become largely worthless to businesses and the courts," he wrote. "No business can plan for the future on the basis of guidelines they know are one election away from rescission, and no court will rely on guidance that is so obviously partisan."

The guidelines were adopted in December 2023 by the Biden administration, replacing both 2010 guidance on mergers between direct competitors and 2020 rules by the first Trump administration on so-called vertical deals, which involve companies that operate in the same supply chain but don't compete directly. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other

business groups criticized the guidelines, saying they would chill merger activity.

Since their adoption, the rules have been cited favorably by several courts including in the FTC's successful challenges to the deal between Kroger Co. and Albertsons Cos. and Tapestry Inc. and Capri Holdings Ltd.

In written responses to senators, Gail Slater — Trump's nominee to head the Justice Department's antitrust division — said she agreed with maintaining the 2023 rules.

"It is critical to the antitrust division's law enforcement mission that its guidelines reflect the original meaning of the applicable statutory text as interpreted by the binding rulings of the courts," she wrote.

"The merger guidelines have been revised periodically when time and experience suggest changes are necessary, but when revisions are undertaken a careful and transparent process should be used to ensure our guidelines maintain the stability needed for rules of the road to serve their purpose," Slater continued.

Nylen writes for Bloomberg News.



Story suggestion? Want to write for biztimes.biz?
Email tony.frenzel@thmedia.com and megan.gloss@thmedia.com

New self-help book highlights mental health crisis affecting men

BY BUSINESS WIRE

TAHOE CITY, Calif. — Silicon Valley tech entrepreneur Mark Gogolewski's new self-help book, available in hardcover, paperback and Kindle, highlights the overlooked mental health crisis facing men, especially high achievers, providing readers with insights on overcoming addiction and mental health crises, aiming to reshape the definition of the term "addict."

In "How to Be OK (When You're Supposed to Be OK But You're Not)" (Lisec Ghostwriting), Gogolewski writes about his personal struggle to overcome addiction, offering reflections about how men experience these problems differently.

"Men's struggles with mental health are tangled up in their masculinity," he said. "Rather than try to ignore or even criticize that, I wanted to tackle it head on and give advice to men in a language they understand right now."

Research shows that men struggle more with addiction and untreated mental illness. According to recent studies, men are twice as likely to binge drink as women and three

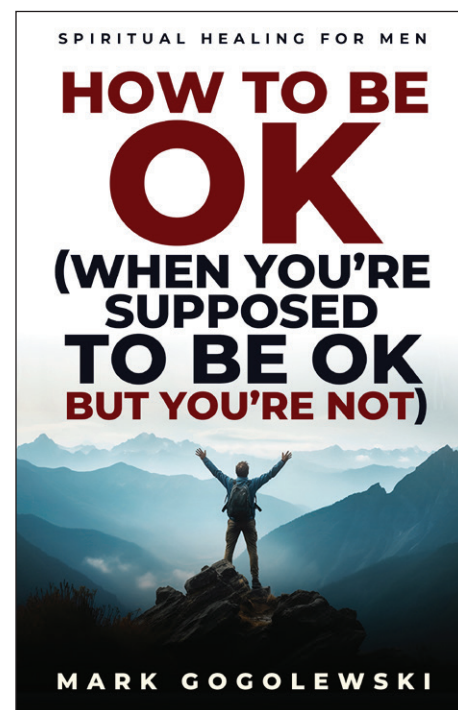
times as likely to die from alcohol-related issues.

In "How to Be OK," Gogolewski says that many men struggle with traditional therapy and 12-step programs and details his experiences trying everything from skydiving to ayahuasca to fight his addiction. Among the many words of wisdom, he explores the common struggles men face in his book and offers helpful advice, such as finding a therapist who understands their particular needs.

"A lot of important advice for men facing addiction and other mental health issues is inadvertently packaged in ways that men resist," Gogolewski said. "I hope that by talking to men as men, we can get them the help that they really need."

Gogolewski is an entrepreneur, start-up advisor, investor, filmmaker and father of two based in Tahoe City, Calif. He has achieved success in the tech industry, including with the sale of Denali Software to Cadence Design Systems and Nvelo to Samsung. This is his first book.

For more information, visit www.markgogolewski.com.



Documentary showcases the printing company Imagine

BY GLOBE NEWSWIRE

MINNEAPOLIS — At the end of last year, printing company Imagine brought a film crew from WhatTheyThink Films inside its Twin Cities location for an behind-the-scenes look at its operations.

Following Imagine's recognition as the No. 2 wide-format printing company for the second consecutive year, can now see what makes it a powerhouse in design, engineering and production.

The documentary features interviews with key team members across executive leadership, sales, distribution and manufacturing, offering an inside look at what drives Imagine's success.

With four facilities across the country — including an 850,000-square-foot flagship

in the Twin Cities — Imagine delivers specialized printing solutions. Additionally, its Los Angeles based division, Midnight Oil, creates billboards for the film industry. Imagine partners with brands to develop and produce everything from in-store marketing and displays to large-scale rollouts, combining conceptual design, engineering innovation and production.

In sectors like health care — now contributing nearly 10% of Imagine's revenue — precision, compliance and scalability are critical. By integrating design, engineering and production under one roof, Imagine offers a seamless end-to-end advantage, transforming complex challenges into high-impact solutions.

The company's process begins with craft-

ing strategies to maximize budgets, then moves through ideation and design before carrying projects to production and fulfillment.

Innovative tools and sustainability

Imagine's execution comes from the combination of creative, design and engineering expertise, backed by an infrastructure built for precision and speed. Imagine Studio enhances the creative process, ensuring a smooth transition from concept to production.

The documentary also highlights Imagine's sustainability commitments, showcasing its investment in cutting-edge equipment that reduces energy consumption, while maintaining production efficiency.

FOR SMALL BUSINESS IT'S ALL IN THE CLOUD



CLOUD VOICE
POWERED BY MEDIACOM BUSINESS

Bring big business capabilities to your small business with Cloud Voice. Enjoy seamless phone and data operations powered by our internet connection for unmatched reliability, flexibility, and advanced features. Plus, we handle all software management and updates—no onsite phone equipment required!

CALL 800-479-2091 TODAY FOR CUSTOMIZED PLANS

**MEDIACOMSM
BUSINESS**

Term contract required. Available only to qualified new business accounts who have not subscribed to Mediacom Business services within the last 6 months. Service price does not include standard installation fee (\$99.95, more if special work is needed) or the following recurring monthly charges: (i) additional phone charges for optional features including: international calling, directory assistance and operator services; (ii) voice equipment rental; (iii) nonstandard installation charges, such as construction costs, internal wiring, auxiliary devices (overhead paging, door buzzers, etc.) or (iv) taxes, and other amounts required by law to be collected or paid. The monthly service charge and additional charges may change from time to time. Other conditions, requirements and restrictions may apply. Requires CAT5 or better cabling to be present at each phone location. © 2025 Mediacom Communications Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

GIVE ROB MARTIN A CALL!

815-535-4416

Rob has the new Ram Commercial vehicles you want and will fully customize them for your needs!



BusinessLink has you covered.

Our investment in your company provides:

- Complimentary membership, no dues, no fees
- Priority next-available bay service for your business vehicles
- Extended service/repair hours
- Free loaners for selected vehicles
- Free shuttle service
- Expertise in commercial financing options
- 24/7 towing service available
- We will come to your place of business



adno=415500

**JFK Road at Dodge St., Dubuque, IA
563-583-5781 • 800-747-4221 • www.TurpinDodge.com**