

U.S. Senator Dick Durbin talks small business at Alton-based round table discussion

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-Illinois) visited Alton late Monday afternoon for a round table discussion at Post Commons, located at 300 Alby.

As many as 25 business owners from across the Riverbend were allowed to request a spot at the event, which focused on the needs of employers in the Riverbend area, especially Alton-based small businesses. He was joined by Democratic Illinois State Senate Candidate Rachelle Aud Crowe, who also sat and listened to the needs of the local business leaders assembled.

“Small businesses are the backbone of Illinois's economy,” Aud Crowe said in a release. “Not only do they employ a majority of our workforce, but they are also anchors in our communities and key towards revitalizing neighborhoods across our region.”

Many of the businesses represented at the discussion were featured in season three of *The Small Business Revolution* – a show by the Deluxe Corporation, which is currently the number one program in reality and lifestyle streaming on Hulu. Those included Today's Beauty Supply and Shampooches Dog Grooming. Other businesses in attendance were Macias Insurance, The Loading Dock, Roberts Motors, Sherry's Snacks and It's Raining Zen.

Dave Nunnally, who owns It's Raining Zen with his wife, Donna, said he was happy to be there, adding it was great to see national-level politicians working at the local level.

“I am thankful Senator Durbin and Rachelle Aud Crowe took the time to listen and learn about the concerns of business owners here in the Riverbend,” he said in a Facebook message. “It was really refreshing to listen to opinions and thoughts from a diverse cross-section of business owners, each with unique concerns about the sustainability of their business, but, more importantly, with real heart-felt suggestions on actions that could be considered in Springfield and Washington, D.C. That might strengthen their business' footprint and stability.”



Durbin's comments echoed Nunnally with the need for small businesses to voice their needs – as they are quickly becoming the backbone of the U.S. economy.

“Over the last few decades, as American corporations have downsized and outsourced their workers, America's small businesses have become a growing force in our economy,” he said. “Fostering conversation in our communities about what tools small businesses need to succeed is the first step in ensuring we are working to break down barriers to growth and empower our entrepreneurs.”

Many of those issues addressed by small businesses were related to expenses, including wages, employee healthcare and taxes.

“It was absolutely heart-warming to hear the near-unanimous concern around the table regarding affordable healthcare for employees shared by many business owners, as well as other financial concerns such as wages, business regulation and taxes, which impact small businesses in Downstate Illinois,” Nunnally remarked.

The event lasted from 4:30-5:30 p.m.