



# State of the RiverBend Luncheon Celebrates Successes of Our Community

by John Hentrich  
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*2014 Captain of the Riverbend Award winners: RBGA 2015 Chair elect Karen Cooper of Illinois American Water, Larry Franklin and Steve Thompson of CNB Bank & Trust, Jamie Slaten of Scott Credit Union, from the Village of East Alton: Alan Hale, Phil Keasler and Joe Silkwood, Cindy Smalley of Cope Plastics, Godfrey Mayor Mike McCormick and 2014 RBGA Chairman John Keller of Carrollton Bank*

The Captain of the Riverbend Awards were created by the Growth Association to identify and honor the many ways in which local organizations have enhanced the River Bend region. These awards are presented to businesses, bodies of government and individuals that have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to public enhancement, community service and /or economic enhancement of the region. Our 5 winners were CNB Bank & Trust, NA, Cope Plastics, Scott Credit Union, Village of East Alton and the Village of Godfrey.

CNB Bank & Trust, NA is the oldest continuously run bank in Illinois by virtue of its charter of the former Greene County National Bank which was founded in 1854. They have had their presence in the Riverbend since 1999. CNB has 13 locations and 215 employees.

They are involved in many local, state and national organizations which occur through employees who are actively engaged in leadership roles in these organizations. Some of those organizations are Alton Memorial Hospital, Alton Athletic Association, Salvation Army, Boys & Girls Club, East Alton Ice Arena, Madison County Urban League, Lewis & Clark Community College, Pride and several banking trade organizations.

In addition to the time their employees volunteer, CNB gives more than \$40,000 to area non-profits including Saint Anthony's Foundation, VFW Post 1308, SCORE, Alton Main Street, Jacoby Arts Center and many, many more. In addition to the cash contributions, they provide more than \$25,000 in in-kind donations.

Cope Plastics is one of those companies that could take this award home every year. You can count on their support of charitable causes year after year. As an example.... Cindy's role with the United Way. Not only does she serve on that Board as a leader, she has headed campaigns, chaired events, and sponsored special events to raise funds for United Way. Her sister Jane serves in leadership roles at SIEA, Saint Anthony's hospital and Lewis & Clark Community College. Cope has representatives in many organizations such as Pride, Inc., the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and the RBGA. In addition to giving their time and talent in the community, they give nearly \$60,000 annually to local organizations and more than \$15,000 in in-kind donations.

Although founded in 1943, Scott Credit Union is a relative newcomer to the Riverbend, first with a facility in East Alton and then with their new facility in Wood River. They serve more than 2,000 members in the Riverbend area.

Scott's community relations personnel contribute their time to many area non-profit organizations. That department exists to facilitate the company's commitment to the community. In May of this year, they hosted their 8<sup>th</sup> annual golf tournament which

raised more than \$20,000 to benefit the United Way of Greater St. Louis. They also sponsored the 2014 Mardi Gras Ball which benefitted the American Cancer Society. In addition to more than 500 volunteer hours, the event raised nearly \$90,000. Cash contributions to area organizations totaled \$55,000. Many volunteer hours and in-kind contributions were given to more than 40 different non-profits.

East Alton looks a whole lot different today than it had just a few short years ago. Under Mayor Bright's leadership, many derelict homes and buildings have been torn down, parks and park equipment has been upgraded, and they have actively sought new owners for buildings that were previously owned by out-of-town landlords.

The latest improvement, and most likely the largest, is the Emerald Ridge development. The former "Defense Area" is being demolished and replaced with 23 two-bedroom homes, 11 three-bedroom homes and 12 four-bedroom homes. All homes meet Enterprise Green Communities standards, making the product highly efficient, healthy and affordable on a long-term basis. In addition to this \$15.7 million investment, East Alton is developing a central park at the site for the use of the entire area and repaving North Drive, East Drive and Ohio Street.

In Godfrey, the primary focus for the elected officials and employees is to ensure that it is an amazing place to live, work and play. Godfrey has recently implemented both a TIF (Tax Increment Finance) and Business District along their main corridor to finance further improvements in infrastructure. They have organized an Adopt-A-Highway program and host a wide array of community concerts and festivals.

Where their citizens will see the most tangible improvements is at Godfrey's Glazebrook Park where \$1.7 million has recently been invested. The scope of the project was to provide state-of-the-art, family-friendly recreational space. They have added 4 ball fields, a concession stand, additional restroom facilities, and improved access and sidewalks. Most of the money for these projects came from a grant from the Metro East Parks and Recreation District and a grant from the Department of Natural Resources using very little of the Village's funds.

RBGA members who sponsored this year's State of the RiverBend Luncheon: 1<sup>st</sup> MidAmerica Credit Union, AdVantage NEWS, Alton Community Unit School District, Alton Little Theater, Alton Memorial Hospital, Alton Steel, Ameren Illinois, American Water, America's Central Port, Andy's Auto Body & Car Care, Associated Bank, Argosy, Beverly Farm, Carrollton Bank, City of Grafton, Clark Properties, CNB Bank & Trust, Contegra Construction Company, Cope Plastics, First Clover Leaf Bank, Glenhaven Gardens of Alton, Illinois American Water, Lewis & Clark Community College, Liberty Bank, Morrissey Construction, Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery, Phone Masters, Quality Buick GMC Cadillac, Saint Anthony's Health Center, Scott

Credit Union, Senator Haine, Sheppard Morgan & Schwaab, St. Louis Regional Airport, St. Louis Regional Chamber, The Telegraph, TheBANK of Edwardsville, Village of Godfrey, WBGZ/AltonDailyNews.com, Wegman Electric Company, WellSpring Resources and Werts Welding & Tank Service.

The following is the investment we are mentioning in the presentation:

We are fortunate that there is a significant amount of investment in the Riverbend – both public and private.

In Wood River, plans are underway for the new \$7.8 million police facility at the former BP site. Jack Schmitt just opened their new \$6 million site at Illinois Rt. 143. Andy's Auto Care just renovated a site and added car repair and sales to that Corridor, and the Pump House right next door is adding on to their facility. Roxana is in the midst of the water treatment plant upgrades and South Roxana is actively recruiting new business.

The health field continues to grow and investment is strong at Alton Memorial Hospital with the renovation and expansion of their Women's Health and Childbirth Center. Saint Anthony's will complete their merge with OSF in the next few days, and we'll continue to see investment in their facilities. Senior Services Plus is gearing up for their \$4.5 million expansion.

West Star Aviation completed their 40,000 square foot addition which represents an investment of nearly \$6 million dollars and represents more than 300 highly-skilled/high paying jobs. Taxiway improvements are underway at St. Louis Regional Airport and Dave Miller assures us that the old Wayside Estates will be re-developed by GJ Grewe now that the FAA paperwork is complete.

Investment in our education facilities continues at a strong pace with nearly \$6 million currently being invested at LCCC, new athletic fields at Alton High School, more than \$4 million being invested at the Civic Memorial high School, and a new dental simulation lab at the SIU Dental School.

Homer Adams Parkway has seen the opening of several new businesses since last year, and the new multi-modal facility in Alton will be a catalyst to new development. Each of the municipalities has road improvement projects underway.

Illinois American Water and Ameren Illinois are investing millions on new infrastructure to keep up with our growing communities.

The fall colors are spectacular and there's no better spot to see them than at one of the fine establishments in Grafton where investment and growth continue. Aeries Terrace

just celebrated with a ribbon cutting and plans for future development there continue. Look for news from the Grafton Winery and Brewhaus too...they're working on expansion as well.

A lot of this development wouldn't happen without the Riverbend Enterprise Zone. We at the Growth Association are working with area businesses, Madison County and consultant Opportunity Alliance to make sure that our Zone is one of the 50 that get approved and re-instated after the 103 that the State currently has expire. A lot of work and investment is going into the process of renewal.