



# Three Alton-based Businesses Join RiverBend Growth Association In August

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GODFREY - The RiverBend Growth Association added three Alton-based businesses in August to its list of new members joining in 2021.

Opening in 2018, **The Brown Bag Bistro** is owned and operated by the mother-daughter duo of Christine and Erin Velloff. It is an American-style bistro that specializes in unique sandwiches, soups, salads, appetizers, and homemade desserts.

“We are joining the RiverBend Growth Association to have the opportunity to network with other local business owners,” said Chris Velloff. “We hope to reach new potential customers by joining the RBGA as well, and to potentially gain some new ideas for our business.”

Located in the heart of Downtown Alton at 318 East Broadway, The Brown Bag Bistro opens daily at 10:30 a.m. Closing at 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday, the venue is open until 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and until 6 p.m. on Sunday.

For more information and to view their menu, visit online at [brownbagbistroalton.com](http://brownbagbistroalton.com). You may also follow them on Facebook or Instagram, @thebrownbagbistroalton, or call (618) 433-9933.



**The Dream Center of Alton** serves Madison, Jersey, and St. Clair counties as part of its mission “to restore the shattered dreams of anyone who has been affected by incarceration.” Dar Bryant serves as its executive director.

Located at 3401 Fosterburg Road, Alton, sharing grounds with The River Church, their 6,000-square-foot facility houses office space, space for use by partner agencies, a lunchroom, food pantry, a clothing needs area, and a group meeting room.

As a nonprofit organization, The Dream Center of Alton shares a vision of growing a coalition of like-minded organizations committed to creating positive change in the community. They work with a large referral network that includes mental health counseling service providers, health care organizations, local community colleges, and other allies to refer clients for further care, services, and education.

Since its formation, The Dream Center has also developed working relationships with IDOC (Illinois Department of Corrections, FBOP (Federal Bureau of Prisons), IDJJ (Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice), state and county officials, legislators, and other local and regional nonprofit organization and agencies.

Programming and services provided through The Dream Center address issues and challenges related to adult re-entry into the community after incarceration, children of incarcerated parents, juvenile justice, and strengthening community empowerment by connecting recovery and re-entry resources.

“We are here to help those getting released from prison reenter society in a positive way,” said Steven Johnson, the nonprofit’s director of community relations. “By helping clients with emergency food, clothing, and bus passes initially, we help provide a way for them to get around and find a job. Through collaborative referrals and partnering employment agencies, we help refer clients to second-chance job programs.

“Employment is one of the biggest challenges to those with a felony conviction,” Johnson added, “but it is also one of the biggest deterrents to keep people *out* of prison. We have implemented key components and our own unique programs and developed a service that is proven to be highly effective in reducing recidivism by targeting the problem instead of the symptom.”

Their dream is to be part of a community where everyone is treated fairly and equally in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. Johnson further noted, “To date, we have served over 1,500 clients.”

For more information about The Dream Center of Alton, visit [thedreamcenterofalton.com](http://thedreamcenterofalton.com) or call (618) 433-8850.



**Trident Inspections LLC** provides homebuyers and investors with leading home inspection and commercial inspection services. Marc Ressler is the Owner/Inspector of the company, located at 815 Douglas Street, Alton.

“Purchasing real estate is one of the most important decisions you ever make. You need to rely on a service that understands the significance of your investment and will work with you to uncover the details of your property,” Ressler said about the “why” behind his business.

“Our goal is to provide a straightforward, no-nonsense approach that presents you with a fast, efficient evaluation, in-depth reports, and clear information that you can understand and utilize,” he added.

As a part of their service offerings, Trident Inspections features thermal imaging. Thermography, or infrared imaging, is a non-invasive, advanced technology that enables an inspector to show clients details about a home that can't be seen using traditional methods.

“Some examples of things that can be discovered with the aid of thermal imaging are missing and damp insulation, roof and plumbing leaks, and electrical issues,” Ressler noted.

“Offering this unique service allows Trident Inspections to provide unbiased, dedicated, and honest services when inspecting one of the most important investments in a customer's life, whether it is their home or their business,” said Ressler.

“Membership in the RBGA is important to me because I believe supporting our local chamber and the businesses they represent supports the foundation of our community,” Ressler said. “Trident Inspections strives to help sustain that foundation by supporting local events, fundraisers, and with our chamber involvement. We hope to gain knowledge regarding our local businesses and community through our membership and discover how Trident Inspections can play an important role as a member.”

To learn more about Trident Inspections LLC, visit online at [tridentinspectionsllc.com](http://tridentinspectionsllc.com) or call (618) 334-5785.

The RiverBend Growth Association is the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development organization for the 11 communities known as the Riverbend. For more information about the Growth Association, please visit [www.growthassociation.com](http://www.growthassociation.com) or call (618) 467-2280.