



Godfrey Business Spotlight: Karen Wilson State Farm

by Jim Mager - Village of Godfrey Economic Development
January 10 2024 4:06 PM



GODFREY - “Like a good neighbor, State Farm (or should we say, Karen) is there...”
And what a good neighbor she is to so many in the community.

Mrs. Wilson is very active and committed to the community. She does, or has, served on several community service organization boards. She is on the boards of the Riverbend Growth Association, North Alton-Godfrey Business Council, Pride, Inc., Lewis and Clark Community College Foundation, and Asbury Village. Karen was very instrumental, through Pride, Inc., in developing the “Welcome to Godfrey” signs at both the northern and southern entrances to the Village.

She has chaired the local Bucket Brigade, which her father started in 1988. She also co-chaired, with Pat Ackman, the Miles Davis Memorial Committee that raised money to erect a statue of Miles Davis in his birth town of Alton.

While many currently recognize Karen as a State Farm agent, she does have a varied career. Back in the day, she sold real estate in the area. In the 70s, real estate was going strong until the interest rate hit 18 to 20%, and it killed home sales. In 1980, she left the profession to stay home to raise her family.

In the course of raising kids, she got involved in volunteering at school, became a teacher's aid, and then went back to school herself to pick up classes to get a teaching certificate. In 1994, she became a teacher of English, Social Studies and Reading to seventh graders at Alton's East Middle School. A few years in the classroom and Karen was promoted to an administrator within the district. She remained in education until July 2002 when there was an opportunity to join State Farm.

With the transition to insurance, she became a second-generation State Farm Agent. Her first office was in Monticello Plaza. While that location was a place to get started, it did not lend itself to the goals she had for her business. She purchased the property at 225 Tolle Lane in Godfrey. At the time, the building was a rental property and was zoned multi-family. She had to go through the process of getting the property rezoned and completely renovating the structure to the nice facility that it is today.

“In my new location, what was very important to me was my sign,” Wilson said. Even now it is a pleasant observation to drive past her office and take note of the clever quotes that she has posted on the sign.

Her passion for State Farm was first ignited as a child answering the phone for her dad, who was a long-time State Farm agent in Alton. In high school and college, Karen worked weekends and summers for him, learning how to connect with customers and help them navigate the confusing world of insurance.

From helping her father, Karen went off to college and spent two years at the University of Missouri-Columbia and then transferred to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

She holds a degree in Elementary Education with a middle school endorsement and a master's degree in educational administration. Although it may have seemed strange to others to leave a career in education, she was coming back home to what she had experienced growing up — “Being able to educate others on strategies to manage their risks was more logical for me than others realized,” said Karen.

At Karen Wilson State Farm, they want customers to feel at home. They can help solve problems, navigate and manage risks, and help people realize dreams. The friendly and knowledgeable team is licensed and has years of experience with insurance and financial services. Whether it is car, home, renters, life and more, they will help find the right policy.

Karen lives in Godfrey with her husband of 40+ years. They have three children and eight grandchildren. When not working or serving the community, she enjoys traveling.

Karen Wilson State Farm can be found at 225 Tolle Lane in Godfrey. Call 618-466-5774 for more information. To learn more about Godfrey and the businesses and people who make up the community, check out VisitGodfrey.com.





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