

Developments

Economic Development News in Champaign County, Ohio

Second Quarter 2021

They're Taking Local Agriculture in New Directions

Members of three established Champaign County farm families are taking local agriculture and local foods in new directions.



Todd Woodruff saw just what he needed to fulfill his vision for The Woodruff

Farm: the former Robert Rothschild Farm property at 3143 E. U.S. Hwy 36, Urbana.

"This property lends itself to our total vision of what we want to do, with the agricultural landscapes, the restaurant and food processing capabilities."

Since acquiring the property in 2018, Woodruff and sons Trevor and Levi have been turning vision to reality. They started by setting up a facility to process their Jersey cows' milk.

In November 2020 they opened the Farm Connection Market at the farm, where they sell their milk and Angus beef, locally raised pork and chicken,



Levi, Todd and Trevor Woodruff in the milk processing facility of The Woodruff Farm.

and other local food products and wine. You can order at thewoodrufffarm.com or shop in the market.

In late June they'll start major renovations of the former Rothschild restaurant building, to open their restaurant in spring 2022.

Also, they'll produce ice cream (with Woodruff's Jersey milk); grana, a hard, aged cheese; and ready-made, locally

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sourced, farm fresh meals with chicken, beef or pork and two sides.

Of the restaurant, Todd says, "The menu will be based around what we and our local partners raise. We'll provide our guests exceptional, quality service in a very inviting atmosphere."

A fourth-generation family potato business in Champaign County, **Michael Family Farms**



Farms is growing its capabilities by erecting a 40,000-square-foot combined potato washing and storage building at 1500 E. Hickory Grove.

The site of the former Urbana Local School, the property was recently auctioned by Urbana City Schools.

Michael Family Farms sells over 30 types of potatoes and created a national

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First Legacy Place Apartments to Be Ready Mid to Late June

Apartments at two of the three Legacy Place senior living communities – Legacy Place North and South, at the former Urbana North and South elementary schools – will be ready for move-in by mid to late June. The third Legacy Place property – Monument Square, the former Douglas Hotel in

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downtown Urbana – will be ready for residents December 2021/January 2022.

Seniors age 55+ interested in leasing a Legacy Place apartment can:

- Visit livelegacyplace.com to complete a pre-qualification questionnaire and schedule a tour at Legacy North or South
- Call 937-638-0211
- Or email legacyplace@herronmgmt.com

Jill Meals-Herron, CEO of Herron Property Management, said that her team has already assisted several seniors who completed the

questionnaire. Tours will be scheduled from 2 to 4 p.m., by appointment, after June 10. "The Legacy Place properties merge history and modern architecture to provide residents a comfortable, beautiful place to live and stay active," Meals-Herron said.



Apartments at Legacy Place North and South are nearing completion.

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Moving On Up: Downtown Living

Amber and Cody Smith, who own and manage apartments in Urbana and Springfield through Cober Properties, have lived in a downtown Urbana loft apartment since 2015 – now with three children, ages 2 to 6.

They're among downtown building owners currently developing loft apartments in Urbana.

"We love this style of living," Amber says. "Cody and I are passionate about bringing life

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back to these beautiful old buildings and supporting a return to downtown living."

Amber, who serves on the Champaign County Housing Consortium, says, "It's great for downtowns to have more people living there."

Other Urbana loft projects underway:

Pat and Patsy Thacker, who bought 12 Monument Square, a vacant three-story building next door to their restaurant, Café Paradiso. They've renovated the first floor for In Good Taste Market (see Page 4). Above, they'll complete a second-floor apartment by fall 2021 and a third-floor unit, with a mezzanine for a second bedroom or office, by early 2022.

Jamon Sellman (see CEP Developing News, Page 4) will build nine loft apartments – from a 389-square-foot studio apartment to a 1,900-square-foot three bedroom, two bath unit in the former Goodfellow's Hall – above his insurance agency at 38 Monument Square. The Urbana Lofts, with a rooftop deck, are projected to be ready spring 2022.

Dr. Dave Smith envisions the 12 apartments he's developing at 219 N. Main St. as live-work units for creative professionals. He's named them the Skylight Loft Apartments, for the building's three skylights that illuminate the hallways and shared community space on both floors. They're above retail space he developed – now used by Streamline Design + Print and Downtown Nutrition.



Amber and Cody Smith (in black), at center of the ribbon cutting for their business, The Merchant Shops, 112 N. Main St., above which they are developing eight one-bedroom loft apartments with rooftop deck.



Michael Pelfrey, process engineer at Weidmann, leads Triad High School seniors on a tour, introducing them to career opportunities.

Weidmann Recruiting To Meet Rising Demand

Weidmann Electrical Technology, Inc. in Urbana makes an essential product that's rising in demand – board and paper insulation for electrical transformers. The company continued production throughout the pandemic, says General Manager Tom Amedro.

"The marketplace for transformers is increasing." The growth in orders, he explains, is threefold: transformers for renewable energy projects, transformers to replace units at the end of their lifecycle, and transformers for new residential and commercial development.

WEIDMANN

This adds up to Weidmann needing new employees to join its workforce of 150. Amedro said Weidmann is offering sign-on and referral bonuses, starting pay from \$15.75 to \$17.85 an hour, plus an additional \$1.50 an hour for second shift and \$1 an hour for third. Benefits include a 401(k) match, health, dental, vision and life insurance, PTO, clothing allowance and fitness reimbursement.

To help fill second- and third-shift positions, Weidmann is offering flexible, part-time hours, Amedro adds. For instance, for parents caring for children during the day or retirees who want extra income. "We're offering flexible hours to meet people's needs and availability."

Weidmann has also been recruiting high school students, and this spring hired two local seniors to work part-time with the opportunity to apply for full-time jobs after graduation.

Weidmann supports the economic development mission of the CEP as a Patron level CEP partnership investor. Amedro explains, "We're situated in a great community. We look to continue to grow, to support our community and attract talent here."

News from Champaign County Villages

Champaign County's three villages – Mechanicsburg, North Lewisburg and St. Paris – partner with the CEP for economic development services.

Here's news from each:

Mechanicsburg: The Mechanicsburg First Responders Car Show, Saturday, Sept. 4, will benefit the Mechanicsburg EMS, Fire and Police departments. In 2019, with 250 cars, the event raised \$6,000. Organizers expect 400 cars this year, outgrowing its downtown site. New location to be announced.

The show begins with registration from 11 to 2, with awards presented at 5 p.m. Will include a raffle and concessions. For information, contact Scott Wilson, 937-869-8782.

North Lewisburg: Triad Local School District's new athletic facility will host Red, White & Cards, July 2 and 3, featuring a ribbon cutting/grand opening, fireworks, food trucks,

a 5K, co-ed softball, kids' activities, movie night and silent auction.

The facility includes a new football field, bleachers, weight room, locker rooms, concession stand, track, and community room, which is available for rent (tables and chairs included) for community events, including graduation parties. Total capacity of 75; room can be divided in two. Contact Martee Dunlap, dunlap@triadk12.org.

St. Paris: The St. Paris Lions Club is coordinating a June 25 lunch, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., for 500 cyclists in the Western Ohio Bicycle Adventure (WOBA). The St. Paris Federation of Churches, the Village of St. Paris, Our Town St. Paris and St. Paris Grassroots will join the Lions Club in hosting the lunch. Other organizations are invited to help, says Jason Hoelscher, President of St. Paris Lions Club.

Incentives Yield \$10M in Payroll

The Champaign County Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) recently reviewed tax incentive agreements for five businesses that expanded.

TIRC annually reviews tax incentive agreements to make certain that the businesses comply with the requirements of their agreements – to create jobs, retain employees and invest in their expanded facility.

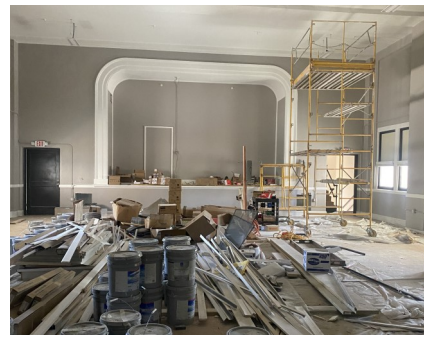
All five companies were found in compliance, and the review determined that in 2019 the companies paid new real estate taxes of \$392,930.23 and generated a return on investment of \$10,108,000 in new net payroll.

Memorial Health added \$2.9 million in new payroll in 2019; **Bundy Baking Solutions**, \$3.4

million; **Weidmann Electrical Technology, Inc.**, \$536,000; **KTH Parts Industries, Inc.**, \$2.7 million for two expansion projects; and **Navistar**, \$572,000.

"Tax incentive agreements made with new and growing businesses in our county provide only a temporary abatement of taxes," CEP Director Marcia Bailey said. The agreements reviewed by TIRC resulted in a temporary abatement of \$1,152,510 in taxes.

"In the long run the agreements deliver a substantial return on investment in increased taxes paid by the businesses, as well as an increase in the number of jobs and wages paid."



Community room at Legacy Place South.

Legacy Place Scheduling Tours

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The one- and two-bedroom apartments are equipped with washers, dryers and kitchen appliances. Some incorporate features of the schools like chalkboards, bulletin boards and wall art.

Legacy Place North amenities include a community room, computer stations and a library. Legacy Place South offers a fitness center, library, and a community room large enough to host special events, such as a senior prom, for residents of all three Legacy Place properties.

The South community room, formerly the school's gym and stage, also includes the school's projection room, which will be used for movie nights.

Other features include a unit at Legacy Place North

that residents can reserve for out-of-town guests. Both school properties will have outdoor grilling stations and are keeping much of the schools' playground equipment. "That will be great for residents to go outside with their grandchildren."

Community partners will help Legacy Place residents stay active in the community:

- Residential Supports and Services, Inc. (RSSI), which manages housing for people with developmental disabilities. RSSI is a 25 percent owner of Legacy Place. Six of the 51 Legacy Place apartments will be designated for people with developmental disabilities, "allowing them to live on their own and be a part of the community," says Scott DeLong, CEO of RSSI.
- Champaign Family YMCA
- Urbana Champaign County Senior Center
- Champaign Transit System

News from the CEP Office

July 10 Career Fair

CEP business liaison Ashley Cook will have a busy summer promoting job opportunities for area students. And for the entire community she's planning the **Champaign County Career Fair**, to be held 4-7:30 p.m. July 10 at the former Urbana University, with food trucks and live music. It will feature manufacturing and health care jobs.

CEP Welcomes Intern

Taylor Armstrong, an Urbana High School grad and incom-

ing senior political science major at Miami University, is the CEP's summer intern.

He serves as deputy chief of staff for Miami's vice president of government relations. After graduation, he hopes to work in government affairs in the private sector or as a staffer for an elected official.



Armstrong

Welcome These New Champaign County Businesses....

Top row, from left, Hometown Bargains, LLC, 1637 E. U.S. 36, Urbana; Shop Around the Corner, 121 Scioto St., Urbana.

Bottom row, from left, St. Paris Shoppers Grocery & Deli, 311 W. Main St., St. Paris, 937-663-7163; Family Country Cuts, 211 W. Main St., St. Paris; With Love Childcare, LLC, 20 E. Maple Street North Lewisburg.



Developing News...

... Restaurant, Brewery Coming to The Square

An investment group – Todd Michael, Terry Howell, Jason Kyle and Jamon Sellman – has bought the Park National Bank building on Monument Square to develop a new up-scale restaurant.

Kyle and Sellman will be the operating partners of the restaurant and a co-branded brewery they will open at 35 Monument Square, in the northwest corner of the square.

The brewery, projected to open spring 2022, will include a taproom, rooftop deck and event space. The restaurant, featuring premium steaks and seafood, is projected to open winter 2022-23.

... Office Suites for Rent Downtown

The Suites on the Square, 40 Monument Square, offers for rent 10 offices on three floors, with an elevator, 120 to 2,000 square feet, starting at \$300 a month with utilities.

Contact owner Doug Olsen, a licensed real estate agent, DougOlsen@MainStreetRealtyOhio.com, 815-252-8593, or visit [The Suites on the Square Facebook page](#).

... Inclusive Playground Gains Funding

Ground will be broken late August for the EVERYbody Plays! inclusive playground for people of all ages and abilities at Melvin Miller Park. Urbana City Council approved \$360,000 for the first of the three-phase project.

Mary Kay Snyder of the Champaign County Board of Developmental Disabilities says construction will take three to four weeks. Phase I will include 10 pieces of equipment. The playground will be between the current playground and skate park.

Fundraising for Phase II con-

tinues with the sale of engraved bricks and t-shirts. Visit the [EVERYbodyPlays Facebook page](#) for details.

... CEP Assists With Transfer for Habitat Build

The CEP assisted the Village of Mechanicsburg in transferring a vacant lot, at 141 E. Race St., to Habitat for Humanity Champaign County (HFHCC) for its next home build.

Greg Ward, co-chair of the build for Habitat, says construction is projected to begin in August with completion by next spring.

He adds that the grand opening celebration of HFHCC's new ReStore location, at the former NAPA building, 1007 N. Main St., Urbana, will be August 5, with ribbon cutting at noon. Visit [ReStore's Facebook page](#) for details.

... Donor Saves Johnny Appleseed Museum

Thanks to an anonymous donor, the Johnny Appleseed Foundation will become the new owner of Browne Hall, which will continue to be the home of the Johnny Appleseed Museum and Educational Center, 27 College Way, Urbana.

The foundation hopes to have a grand reopening in late September. To help cover reopening costs, the same donor has pledged to match up to \$50,000 in individual gifts to the Johnny Appleseed Museum and Educational Center. Visit johnnyappleseedmuseum.org to learn more and donate, or donate on the foundation's GoFundMe page.

... They're Back!

As we emerge from the pandemic, community events are returning. To name a few, Art Affair on the Square, the Simon Kenton Chili Cook-off, the Balloon Fest. Watch for updates.



Ribbon cutting at In Good Taste Market.

New Directions in Local Agriculture

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marketing group, Fresh Solutions Network, with five other family growers across the country.

Kyle Michael and Kathy Michael Sponheim (the fourth generation) have joined their father, Todd Michael, in the business.

Kathy, who manages sales, marketing and administration, said the new building will store up to 5 million pounds of potatoes for several months. This will allow the business to grow more potatoes. They nearly doubled acreage in 2021.

Construction will be completed by the end of July. Harvest will start the first week of August.

Five generations have lived on Amy Forrest's family farm. And she's just begun the third generation of her local food career. She started with A Tasteful Garden at Columbus' North Market, which evolved into In Good Taste Catering – and now the [In Good Taste Market](#), her shop at 12 Monument



**IN GOOD TASTE
MARKET**

Square, Urbana.

Last year the pandemic shut down her catering business, which included large clients like the Ohio State University College of Agriculture. "It seemed this was the worst possible time, but it's turned out to be the best possible time," she says, after Pat and Patsy Thackery bought the empty building next door to their restaurant, Café Paradiso, and renovated the first floor for Forrest's shop. (The upper floors are now being renovated into loft apartments. See Page 2.)

"I've always wanted to do this kind of shop, a combination of meals to go and local food products," says Forrest, who had been catering for 15 years.

"I fell in love with the building – what a great location."

Each week she stocks three ready-to-go meal selections and salads, and a wide choice of locally sourced food products.

Though she no longer caters, she helps customers plan parties. "I help them figure out their menu and have everything ready for them to pick up."

Contact Us

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