



Celebrating 30 Years of Small Business Success

June 9, 2014

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### Illinois - The State of Innovation

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is pleased to announce the second edition of [Illinois - The State of Innovation](#), our state economic development magazine, is now available. To access the digital edition on your laptop, tablet or phone, visit our [website](#) or the [digital magazine](#).

Our economic development magazine is a powerful tool for business attraction on a global level, as well as for investors and site selectors as they consider their investment opportunities. This issue highlights our clean energy sector, tech growth in new start-ups and jobs, a flourishing life sciences industry, our Midwestern dominance in foreign trade and investment, a resurgence in manufacturing and key strengths in agriculture, food production, transportation and financial services.

Please share [Illinois - The State of Innovation](#) on social media with your friends and community. You may also feature the magazine on your blog, website or newsletters with a link or one of our easy-to-use tools.

We know that Illinois is a great place to live and work, which is why millions of people call it home. With your help, we will make it even better. Adam Pollet, DCEO Director.

### Program Success of the Week – Tranquility Spa & Wellness Center

Tranquility Spa and Wellness Center in St. Charles, IL will celebrate its 14th year in business this September. Beverly Miller and her partner, Loreta Lescelius, have the true entrepreneurial spirit and energy to keep this establishment at its exceptional level and still look for more ways to add to and improve the customer experience.

Ms. Miller opened the original Tranquility Spa in a small space in downtown St. Charles in 2000. By 2003, her business was growing and she needed help and more space. She partnered with Ms. Lescelius and leased a bigger space. Three years later, the partners needed to grow again, and in July 2007, they purchased the building and expanded into a full service day spa utilizing the entire 4,000 square foot structure.

Over time, the ladies developed a wellness center, becoming Tranquility Spa and Wellness Center. They continue to evaluate new and innovative therapies. Tranquility has become a healing and peaceful haven offering skin care, natural nail care, massage therapy, chiropractic and natural medicine, acupuncture, psychotherapy, permanent make-up, AIS therapy, reflexology, yoga therapy and much more.

They are also persistent, optimistic, confident, and full of ideas for the future of their business. While their business has been repeatedly judged the best in the area, they still look to be better, always looking for like-minded and ambitious employees who want to grow with them.

The partners possess the persistence, confidence and optimism needed in entrepreneurs, but they also recognize when to reach out for help. Several years ago, they brought in consultants to help develop procedures for improving their organization and service. In March 2014, they contacted the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Elgin Community College for additional assistance. They began with a Comprehensive Business Assessment to determine the effectiveness of the various functional areas of their business. Next, they enrolled in the Profit Mastery course to ensure a thorough understanding of the financials to guide future decisions. Ms. Miller said of their experience with the SBDC, "Sybil Ege personally worked one-on-one with us to help us understand where we need to focus in the business and how to read and analyze the financial results." The partners continue to use the insight gained with the SBDC to manage by the numbers to ensure continued growth and financial strength.

### **Resource of the Week – SmartBiz**

The company, in partnership with Sacramento-based Golden Pacific Bank, specializes in SBA loans ranging from \$5,000 to \$150,000; terms are 10 years at 6 percent to 8 percent interest, with no prepayment penalty. SmartBiz boasts an online application process that requires fewer documents—it forgoes the traditional business plan and income projections, for instance—and says it can deliver conditional loan approvals in 30 minutes and fund loans inside a week. Find them at <https://www.smartbizloans.com/>

### **Neoserra/WebCATS Update – Cleaning Up Neoserra Records**

To clean up and simplify using Neoserra/WebCATS we will be taking the following steps.

1. User accounts not accessed since 1/1/14 will be inactivated.
2. Advisor records with no activity since 7/1/13 will be inactivated.
3. Professional Development from 7/1/13 will be transferred from WebCATS to the new Neoserra Professional Development module so we can track it consistently and in one place.
4. Outreach will also add the survey evaluation component to Neoserra. You will be able to enter training survey evaluation data into Neoserra in a few weeks.

More changes in security and advisor records will be coming. We will keep you updated. If you are experiencing problems please contact Tom Becker at 217/558-6303 or [tom.becker@illinois.gov](mailto:tom.becker@illinois.gov)

### **Moves and News**

**FastPitch Competition** - You're invited to hear keynote speaker, Joe Abraham, at our eight annual *FastPitch* Competition on Wednesday, June 18, 5:30 p.m. This year the Competition will be moved to a new venue, the UIC College of Medicine in Rockford (601 Parkview Ave.). Please note that Abrahams', who has won numerous awards for his impact on global entrepreneurship and is the author of *Entrepreneurial DNA*, talk will focus on retaining and expanding existing stage one and two businesses. Feel free to share the information to attract both potential *FastPitch* presenters and existing business owners. Anyone within our region is invited to participate in the Competition. *Thank you, Sherry*

Keynote Speaker, Author and Professional Entrepreneur: Joe Abraham at 8th Annual *FastPitch* Competition

Where can you hear a successful serial entrepreneur share his secrets to success AND view Rockford's version of *Shark Tank*? EIGERlab is proud to announce that Joe Abraham will share his entrepreneurial wisdom at the eighth annual *FastPitch* Competition on Wednesday, June 18, 2014 at the UIC College of Medicine in Rockford.

Keynote speaker, Joe Abraham, is a professional entrepreneur and investor who has the battle scars to prove it. Abraham has multiple successful company launches under his belt, and is the founder of BOSI Global which operates a \$100 million portfolio of companies in the United States and Europe in industries ranging from IT and Wellness to Personal Development and Motorsports. He has won numerous awards for his impact on global entrepreneurship and is the author of *Entrepreneurial DNA*, a critically acclaimed book based on his multi-year research into entrepreneurs and their teams. *Regardless if you are a FastPitch presenter or an experienced business owner looking at increasing your profits through growth strategies, everyone will glean entrepreneurial insights from Abraham's informative talk.*

Planning for the 8th Annual *FastPitch* Competition on Wednesday, June 18, 2014 at the UIC College of Medicine in Rockford, IL is well underway. EIGERlab is coordinating and promoting *FastPitch*, which offers *entrepreneurs, inventors, startups, pre-startups, existing business owners and students (high school seniors and college)* the opportunity to “pitch” their business idea or innovative business to a panel of esteemed judges from the business and investment community. *With a top prize of \$5,000 at stake, it will be well-worth three minutes of your time! There will also be a Clean Tech prize totaling \$500.*

*FastPitch* presentation training sessions are scheduled for Tuesday, June 10 and Thursday, June 12 from 5:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m. at the EIGERlab. Presentation training has been arranged to assist applicants with fine-tuning their presentations; cost is \$15. A minimum of one night’s training is *strongly suggested* (preferably Tuesday). Past winners of this competition have stated that training has proven to be very beneficial.

*Deadline for FastPitch participants to submit their business pitches in writing for pre-qualification is Wednesday, June 4; accepted participants will be notified by Friday, June 6.*

In 2014, we are once again partnering with two neighboring Wisconsin counties—Racine & Kenosha, which translates into one additional opportunity for competition. That event will take place on August 20. Please visit [www.EIGERlab.org](http://www.EIGERlab.org) for updates.

For full *FastPitch* contest details, flyer and registration form, visit EIGERlab’s website, [www.EIGERlab.org](http://www.EIGERlab.org). Business pitches must be submitted in writing (1000 words or less) to [SPritz@EIGERlab.org](mailto:SPritz@EIGERlab.org). For additional information, contact Sherry Pritz at 815.316.6357.

*This event made possible by the EIGERlab, Rock Valley College, Northern Illinois University, Rockford Area Economic Development Council, StateLine Angels, and our fabulous sponsors: Alpine Bank, Joseph Behr & Sons, City of Rockford, Growth Dimensions, Illinois Small Business Development Center at RVC, Illinois Procurement Technical Assistance Center at RVC, Northern Illinois Renewable Energy Summit & Expo, Rockford Area Realtors, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, Rockford Local Development Corporation, Savant Capital Management, Seward Screw Products, Sikich, Stillman Bank, Superior Joining Technologies, Universal Die Cast, WilliamsMcCarthy & Winnebago County.*

**Are You Ready to Lead Your Company Through a Crisis? - Tips Shared at Free Webinar Hosted by SBA and Agility Recovery** - Emergency responders are trained to make quick decisions that will protect people and save lives when a natural or man-made disaster occurs. And this is a skill that comes in handy for anyone running a small business. When an emergency hits, the safety of your employees and clients will depend on your smart decisions and quick action.

The ability to properly lead your team and the community through a disaster and toward recovery is an essential quality for a business owner. In addition to making a preparedness plan, it’s also a good idea to find ways to take charge while staying focused on what’s important—the well-being of your employees and customers, and a speedy recovery for your business.

Join Agility Recovery and the U.S. Small Business Administration in a live online discussion on Tuesday, June 17 with former Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator R. David Paulison. He’ll talk about joining FEMA in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and how he managed the leadership challenges involved in that disaster’s response and recovery efforts. Paulison, who served for 30 years as Fire Chief for the Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue Department, will also share tips on how to become a capable manager who is prepared for any kind of disaster.

SBA has partnered with Agility to offer business continuity strategies at its “PrepareMyBusiness” website. Visit [www.preparemybusiness.org](http://www.preparemybusiness.org) to access past webinars and for additional preparedness tips.

The SBA provides disaster recovery assistance in the form of low-interest loans to homeowners, renters, private nonprofits and businesses of all sizes. To learn more, visit [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster).

**WHAT: “Leading with Resiliency During a Disaster”**

A presentation led by R. David Paulison, former FEMA Administrator, followed by a question and answer session

**WHEN:** Tuesday, June 17, 2014 -- 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. ET

**HOW:** Space is limited. Register at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/150368993>

**America's SBDC Network Connect**

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to see the June 5, 2014 edition of [America's SBDC Network Connect newsletter](#).

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and DCEO Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the DCEO Illinois SBDC Network to provide the service delivery partners with regular updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. You may send any information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to [Tom.Becker@illinois.gov](mailto:Tom.Becker@illinois.gov). Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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