

	<p>Illinois Small Business Development Center Network</p> <p>WEEKLY CONNECTION</p> <p>Entrepreneurship ~ Innovation ~ Technology</p>	
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"Professional Guidance for Business Growth"

March 30, 2015

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Spotlight on Success - EpiWorks

"EpiWorks continues to grow, experiencing double digit growth over the past few years. We recently placed another new production tool online, are now increasing our workforce to support the added capacity, and expect strong growth to continue in the foreseeable future.



"In addition, we are just starting to increase our global presence, and become more focused on international trade. We are thankful we have Kathie (Cravens) and the (Illinois SBDC International Trade Center at Champaign County EDC) ILSBDC at Champaign County EDC for assisting us in achieving this goal. EpiWorks traveled to the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain in March 2014 with OTI. Although it was too late to get on the mission and benefit from travel expense reimbursement, OTI made an exception and made space at the show and allowed EpiWorks to share space on the Illinois booth.

Participation provided greater exposure to major players in the industry, and insights into new and future trends in the industry.

"We have already submitted application to OTI for 2015 Barcelona show to enable EpiWorks to take full advantage of the overseas trade mission benefits." EpiWorks exported only \$300,000 worth of products last year but expects exports to accelerate year by year. As EpiWorks looks to the future, international sales are expected to become a significant portion of overall sales. The company has retained 48 employees and added 2 full time employees.

SBDCs In The News

This month's *Entrepreneur* Magazine "Ask A Pro" is one of our own Illinois SBDC Center Directors. The April 2015 edition of *Entrepreneur* magazine's "Ask A Pro" column features advice from Kevin Lust, the Director of the Illinois SBDC at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, Illinois. Please click on [Read more](#) to see the item that was included in America's SBDC Connection newsletter.

Get Your Cities On the Map

Many of you participated in the Google "Get your Business Online" initiative, encouraging small businesses to take the steps to create an online presence for their enterprises. Google is now rolling out an initiative called "Get Your Cities On the Map". The program will continue to help businesses get online, and now includes helping businesses complete their Google Map profile. The Illinois SBDC has worked with Google on the Get Your Business Online and Grow Your Business Online programs. We have recently signed up for the "Get Your Cities On the Map" program and encourage each of the Illinois SBDCs to consider signing up as well. You can read more about the program by [clicking here](#).

Maximizing Neoserra – Email Address Now Required

Our Neoserra system contains a number of client profiles that do not include an e-mail address. In order to address this issue, effective immediately an email address will now be **required** for new clients being entered into Neoserra. It is **extremely important** that SBDC advisors get and maintain valid email addresses for all clients in order to enhance the communication and interaction with your clients. E-mail addresses are required to surveys and notices you send out to your clients and are also needed for any surveys conducted by the state office. Please be sure to enter e-mail addresses into Neoserra for all of your clients.

Valued Resources – Rural Grocery Store Startup & Operations Guide

A new edition of the "[Rural Grocery Store Start-Up and Operations Guide](#)" has been released by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) at Western Illinois University. The guide is available for free download, according to Fred Iutzi, who manages IIRA's outreach to the food and agriculture sectors.

"This guide is a valuable resource for Illinois entrepreneurs and community leaders interested in starting up, expanding or transitioning a grocery store in their rural communities," he explained.

According to the Sean Park—lead author of the new edition and a former grocery store manager—the new edition is greatly revised and expanded and reviews best practices for successfully operating a rural grocery store in the current retail environment. Find the Guide at <http://www.value-added.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/IIRA-Grocery-Guide.pdf>

IESBGA News

The planning committee has been working very hard on the Illinois Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth Association's (IESBGA) Annual Professional Development Conference, which supports the members of the Illinois SBDC Network. Please watch your email over the next 1-2 weeks for the final agenda and information about this outstanding conference. Details are coming soon.

Network News and Moves – Welcome Don Elmore

Please join us in welcoming **Don Elmore** to the Illinois Small Business Development Center Network. Don takes over as Director of the **Illinois SBDC at the Champaign County**

Economic Development Corporation. He brings to the network over 30 years of experience in IT, marketing, product management and consulting. Civic engagement is also important to Don; he once chaired a local arts organization. Don and his wife own the Jane Addams Book Shop in Champaign so he also appreciates the needs and concerns of SBDC small business clients. Welcome to the Illinois SBDC Network, Don!!!

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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. Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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