

	<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"

April 27, 2015

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Small Business Week - 2015

This year, SBA's Illinois District Office, in collaboration with its resource partners like the Illinois SBDC Network, will host or participate in more than [30 events](#) across Illinois to promote small business success through training and partnership.

Throughout this week (April 27 - May 1) and National Small Business Week (May 4-8), SBA Illinois District Office staff will host online and in-person trainings and participate in events related to small business issues and needs. [For a complete list of events and contacts, visit this link to see our Illinois National Small Business Week calendar of events!](#)

Special thanks to all the members of the Illinois SBDC Network who are hosting and/or participating in Small Business Week events throughout Illinois.

Spotlight on Success – Rabbittown

After 20 years in social services, Gail Miller found herself burned out and ready for a new challenge. She originally planned to start a food truck business but was scared away by the high investment cost. Her choice was still risky and looking back on it, she's not sure why buying a 100-plus-year-old building to start an antique mall didn't scare her, but now she's glad it didn't.

Ms. Miller and her husband Gary purchased their first building in Danville in 2011 and within 3 months had the front showroom space rented with 15 vendors selling a wide variety of merchandise from antiques to crafts.

Before long, she had a waiting list of 25 more vendors looking for space, so the couple finished the rest of the building. By June, 2012 the entire place was filled with antiques, collectibles and repurposed items. And still vendors were waiting for space.

By late 2012, the Miller's had purchased and renovated the adjacent building and were providing a location for approximately 50 booths between the two structures. At the time, Ms. Miller said, "there was nothing just like this in Danville. The interest kept growing, and we kept responding to it."

Each booth in the building has a distinct style. Some offer what she calls "rusty and dusty" primitives. She points to an old wooden wagon as an example. Other booths focus on repurposing or industrial style. A hot trend in larger cities now making its way downstate is mid-century modern. Twenty-somethings are paying top dollar in Chicago and Milwaukee for items that were commonplace in the 1940's, 50's and 60's. Pyrex bowls, metal toy baby buggies and ceramic candy dishes as well as other treasures from that era are sprinkled through many of Rabbittown vendors' booths.

Ms. Miller rents space to her vendors and also provides the labor through 9 part-time employees to operate the shop. The relationship doesn't stop there; she provides advertising through social media, radio, TV, print, specialty magazines and brochures. She has even offered workshops on how to display merchandise to maximize sales and is quick to point out that "this is not a museum, we want things to sell."

Last spring they bought yet another building and will open Rabbittown Trade Center to hold auctions on Monday nights. The Miller's aren't done. Plans are in place for an event center, an area for furniture consignment and an area for architectural salvage in the new building too.

Ms. Miller's advice for other entrepreneurs: start small and grow as your market demands. She also emphasizes the need to be flexible, "have a plan and a vision but don't get stuck in that." She points out the need to have a high tolerance for stress and says small business owners work whenever they aren't asleep.

Ms. Miller utilized the services of the **Illinois Small Business Development Center at Danville Area Community College** as she prepared to go into business and continues to see **SBDC Director Carol Nichols** to assist with expansion and other issues and she recommends **SBDC** services to the vendors in her shop.

SBDC's In The News - NASBITE

The Illinois SBDC International Trade Centers were very well represented at the National Association of Small Business International Trade Educators (NASBITE) International Annual Conference held April 15-17 in St. Louis. Special congratulations to Jim Foley, Zach Persons and Mary Ma who each lead training sessions at the conference. Also, on behalf of the tremendous work of all of the Illinois SBDC ITCs, State Director Mark Petrilli accepted the Advancing International Trade Award from NASBITE at the Awards Luncheon on Friday, April 17th. Huge CONGRATULATIONS to everyone involved with the Illinois SBDC International Trade Centers. See a shot below of the ITCs following the Awards Luncheon.



Maximizing Neoserra

Open the link below for directions on how to enter a training event with more than one instructor.

<http://support.outreachsystems.com/resources/help/neoserra/faq.jsp?id=n225>

Valued Resources – LocationOne Information System

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity provides the LocationOne Information System for conducting searches for available commercial and industrial sites and building locations throughout Illinois. Maintained in partnership with communities across the state, LocationOne is designed to address the specific site selection data requirements of businesses and their consultants. Visit the following site to utilize LocationOne.

<http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/Pages/LocationsForYourBusiness.aspx>

Small Business Week - With Small Business Week coming up next month, don't forget that Constant Contact has Local Authorized Experts who can provide free training at your local SBDC. Participants learn about proven marketing techniques for email, social and mobile audiences so they can grow their business. Interested in finding a speaker? Contact Betsy Armstrong at barmstrong@constantcontact.com.

IESBGA News

New Session Added to Annual Conference – A new session was just added to the program at the upcoming IESBA Annual Conference. Betsy Armstrong, Regional Development Director for Constant Contact will be show you how digital marketing done right will deliver increasing customer engagement – but what does “done right” mean? It means taking core components from two powerful tools, email marketing and social media, and combining them to extend your reach, lead you to new customers and drive repeat business from your current customers. In this participants will look at the 4 most popular social media networks – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest. Betsy will show you

the benefits of using each, how other organizations are marketing with them, and some dos and don'ts of each channel. She will also add best practices for email marketing to the mix, showing you how this combination can make your marketing efforts exponentially successful.

IESBGA Annual Conference Site

Illinois State University
470 S University St, Normal, IL 61790
[State Farm Hall of Business](#) (click to go to a map)

Parking at ISU, State Farm Hall of Business

- Parking Deck (A) - University St.: Parking on ground level. Available from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at \$1/hour (take ticket and pay attendant when you leave). You cannot park overnight in this garage.
- Bone Student Center Parking (B) - Parking on ground level. Available from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at \$1/hour (take ticket and pay attendant when you leave). You cannot park overnight in this parking lot.

Lodging Information:

Marriott Bloomington-Normal Hotel & Conference Center
\$134 + tax per night
888-236-2427 or call the hotel direct at 309-862-9000
Group block name: "Southern Illinois University IESBGA."
Deadline: May 1, 2015

Network News and Moves – Verification and Attribution

As we discussed on previous Monthly Connection Calls the Illinois SBDC Network State Office has decreased the frequency of the distribution of the Illinois SBDC Network Impact Survey. Instead of sending this survey to Network clients each quarter, we are now planning to send the survey out just two times each year. These surveys collect recent economic impact performance for clients, automatically loads the impact into Neoserra and also includes attribution statements which tie the efforts of the SBDC Network to the success of the client.

As a reminder, between these surveys, which are sent in January and July, SBDC Network staff are encouraged to collect impact information/verification/attribution directly from clients on a case by case basis using the state impact form template, a center impact template or through email from the client. As long as you maintain a copy of your verification/attribution information from your client you may use whatever method is most effective for your center. Impact collected by your center using any method outside the electronic Illinois SBDC Network Impact Survey must be entered into Neoserra directly by center staff. If you have any questions regarding the guidelines and policies regarding the collection of client impact please contact your Network Coordinator.

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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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