



*"Professional Guidance for Business Growth"*

## July 20, 2015

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### **Spotlight on Success – Wildfires Restaurant**

Wildfires Restaurant is owned by Chris and Morgan Banks in Vienna, Illinois. Customers enjoy a casual dining experience with an inviting atmosphere in a peaceful rustic setting. The restaurant is housed in the former Johnson County USDA forestry building. The menu includes a variety of country style dinners, steaks, fresh salads, and pizza. Both indoor and outdoor seating is available for patrons.

Mr. Banks says that their country style dinners and steaks have been a popular with diners in their region. Carry-out service and limited delivery service is available within the city limits of Vienna. In-house and off-site catering has helped to increase their customer base.

The Banks' contacted the **Illinois Small Business Development Center at Shawnee Community College** when they started investigating the possibility of beginning Wildfires Restaurant. The SBDC assisted the couple with a business plan and financing. Starting this business has resulted in the creation of 14 jobs. They said, "We appreciate the help with the business plan and financial information. This really gave us direction in starting the business and in knowing how much financing we needed to operate the business, especially during the first few months which is really crucial to being successful".

Mr. Banks earned a great deal of industry experience before opening Wildfires. He started as a dishwasher at 16, became a cook and then shift manager. At a Carbondale restaurant he worked as a line cook, assistant kitchen manager, kitchen manager, and then general manager. Wildfires offers some of the same items Mr. Banks had success with at a previous restaurant he operated. He says that automation and technology advances throughout his career have helped to increase the efficiency of operating a restaurant. Mr. Banks works to

keep a fresh menu and has been experimenting with different recipes and his own creations since he was a young boy.

Learn more at <https://www.facebook.com/bankswildfires>

### **SBDC's In The News**

PUCK manufacturing has begun in Jacksonville. "Puck" is the name given by Springfield entrepreneurs Barnabas Helmy and Andrew Brown to a device intended to replace remote controls chronically missing in couch cushions, beneath chairs or behind cabinets.

"We've been working on it for about a year," said Helmy, president and CEO of SmashToast, the tech company he co-founded with Brown.

The Puck concept is relatively straightforward. The battery-powered device would work with smartphones as a universal remote for televisions, stereos, radios and other electronic equipment. Helmy said the idea came from his own frustrating experiences with lost television and stereo remotes.

Jacksonville circuit board manufacturer CCK Automations, online at [cckautomations.com](http://cckautomations.com), is producing the first 500 Puck units, which will serve as a test run toward eventual retail sales, Helmy said. The device name is taken from the character in William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer's Night Dream."

Puck has progressed sufficiently to be awarded a \$50,000 equity investment through a technology competition sponsored by Arch Grants of St. Louis. SmashToast was among 11 recipients announced earlier this month by the nonprofit.

Arch Grants provides equity investment and support services to technology startups.

Helmy said the money would go toward the massive database required by Puck.

There are bugs to work out before the device is ready for retail sales, but Helmy said sports bars would be the initial target market.

"Sports bars have a lot of television and cable remotes," he said.

Breaking into the technology world is tough, said Kevin Lust, director of the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Lincoln Land Community College. Helmy and Brown worked with the program on business models, financing and marketing before launching SmashToast.

Good ideas are just the start, Lust said.

"I compare it to spending your whole life planning a wedding," he said, "but you don't plan what to do after the marriage."

Still, Lust said he was struck by the creativity of SmashToast.

"One of the biggest points came from Barnabas early on in our conversations," Lust said. "If this doesn't work out, I have seven other ideas." <http://www.sj-r.com/article/20150627/news/150629603/?Start=1>

### **Maximizing Neoserra – Economic Impact Forms on Center Connect**

Updated Economic Impact forms for SBDC's, ITC's & PTAC's are available on CenterConnect. This form has spaces to include the individual employee information we need for the Change in Staff and Jobs Retained milestones. Open the links below to find your desired form:

SBDC: [http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/CenterConnect/Forms/SBDC%20Economic%20Impact%20Form%20\(1\).doc](http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/CenterConnect/Forms/SBDC%20Economic%20Impact%20Form%20(1).doc)

ITC: [http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/CenterConnect/Forms/ITC%20Economic%20Impact%20Form%20\(1\).doc](http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/CenterConnect/Forms/ITC%20Economic%20Impact%20Form%20(1).doc)

PTAC: [http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/CenterConnect/Forms/PTAC%20Economic%20Impact%20Form%20\(3\).doc](http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/CenterConnect/Forms/PTAC%20Economic%20Impact%20Form%20(3).doc)

### **Valued Resources – Free IRS Identity Theft Webinar**

Tax-Related Identity Theft Webinar (Individuals & Businesses) - Hosted by: IRS Stakeholder Liaisons of the Central Area – KS, IL, MO, NE & OK

Who is the webinar for?

Small Business Owners & Tax Professionals

Why is the IRS offering this webinar?

We want to help Small Business Owners & Tax Professionals get the information they need. We see & hear a lot of question on this topic.

Help them to avoid additional tax problems.

Share IRS resources available to help Identity Theft victims

What will we cover?

The IRS Strategy to Combat Identity Theft

Address prevention measures

Cover detection of Identity Theft

Victim assistance

IRS Notices

IP PIN's

Business Identity Theft

Protecting your business

Protecting your clients

Identity Theft Recourses & Additional Information

When will it happen?

Tuesday, August 18, 2015 from 1:00p.m.-2:00p.m. (Central Time)

How can small business owners get more information or register?

To Register send us an email at: [SL.Central.IL.Chicago@irs.gov](mailto:SL.Central.IL.Chicago@irs.gov) (no later than noon Central Time on 8/17/2015)

IN THE SUBJECT LINE USE: August ID Theft

IRS will email you back with the link & other information to join the webinar. No IRS CE Credits will be issued for this Webinar. There is no Cost to attend – yes, it is FREE!

Space is limited so please email right away, but no later than noon on August 17, 2015. This will give IRS time to get you the information you need to timely join the webinar at 1:00p.m. on August 18, 2015

### **IESBGA Update – Roger Luman Award**

This past May at its Annual Professional Development Conference in Normal, the Illinois Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth Association (IESBGA) recognized the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Kankakee Community College (KCC) with the Roger Luman Program Excellence Award. The Roger Luman Program Excellence Award recognizes outstanding programs developed by the Small Business Development Center that meets a specific need that will provide an economic impact on businesses or in the community.

In an effort to meet the needs of business growth and job creation in the community, The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Kankakee Community College partnered with the Economic Alliance of Kankakee County to host its annual business plan development competition, "Enterprise U."

"Enterprise U" is a business plan development competition designed to encourage start up business owners to develop business plans that will help expand their services. In an effort to receive the best business plan business owners received training during the competition provided by the Illinois Small Business Development Center in the areas of: how to write a business plan, record keeping, marketing your business and more.

Participants worked on their business plans for three months and the top three winners were selected by a panel of local business owners, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and a local developer. Depending on how the winners placed, winners received startup capital, 6 months rent-free space, business cards, video promotions, free professional consultation and media services and more.

The program has succeeded its goal in participation each year and this year 6 new businesses were formed.

"Enterprise U" has become an annual event promoted and hosted by the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Kankakee Community College and its community partners. Congratulations to Illinois SBDC at KCC director Ken Crite and all of the partner organizations on this tremendous honor.

## **Network News and Moves – America's SBDC Conference Orientation Webinar**

Mark your calendars - the 2015 Conference Orientation is coming soon! Hosted by the America's SBDC Professional Development & Conference Committee

The America's SBDC Conference Orientation is scheduled for July 29th at 3:00 PM EDT. The orientation is a great way to prepare for the conference which has around 1500 attendees. The orientation will provide information regarding the hotel accommodations, transportation, the conference App, pre-conference workshop opportunities, the trade show, workshop opportunities and other exciting news! Please join us and preregister for the webinar with the link below. Note, once you pre-register, the link is specific to your email, please only share the preregistration link. Also, the webinar will be recorded and the recording will be sent to all participants who pre-register.

[Register Now](#)

## **New SBA Deputy Administrator**

Douglas J. Kramer was [confirmed](#) as Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) on June 11, 2015. In this capacity, he is responsible for managing the

agency and ensuring the efficient operation of its programs. He will work to make sure the Agency fulfills its promise to support U.S. Small Businesses.

Prior to this role, he was Counselor to SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet, where he advised on day-to-day management operations of the SBA and the agency's efforts to support the growth and success of American small businesses. Before joining the SBA, Mr. Kramer served in numerous senior leadership positions within the Obama Administration.

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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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