

Opinion

Commercial airlines should be allowed to duke it out in a free marketplace

In mid-November, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood - one of Illinois' own - announced that he would be



Beiser

creating a federal advisory panel to try to fix the commercial airline industry.

The panel is comprised of stakeholders such as airline and airport execs, labor leaders, consumer advocates and manufacturers.

Can the industry be fixed? Not by government, in my opinion. We've been there and done that. The deregulation of airlines in 1978 has helped lower air fares for consumers - at times - but other trends have raised concerns about whether airlines are offsetting low fares at the expense of safety. Most large airlines are outsourcing the majority of their

major aircraft maintenance and repairs, including to overseas repair shops. They are also farming out domestic, short-haul trips to regional airlines that hire less-experienced pilots at lower wages.

Airlines have suffered repeated shocks in recent years, including the Sept. 11 terror attacks, the SARS virus, volatile oil prices and the current economic downturn. They offered fewer seats to passengers, measured by available seats and distance traveled, in the first quarter of 2009 than any other first quarter in more than a decade. The airlines have collectively lost more than 158,000 full-time jobs since employment peaked in 2001 and they've lost an estimated \$30 billion to \$60 billion in recent years. Some 13 commercial airlines have filed for bankruptcy in the past two years alone.

LaHood's advisory panel is charged with a hefty task: coming up with a plan to restore health to an ailing industry - one that continues to lose billions of dollars. The transportation secretary has promised that within one year, the panel

will produce "a roadmap for the future of the aviation industry."

Ed Wytkind, president of the AFL-CIO's transportation trades department, says he doesn't expect the Obama Administration to attempt a return to the kind of regulation that existed before 1978 where the government set fares and routes. But he says he'd like the government to tighten requirements for new, low-cost airlines seeking to enter the marketplace.

A parade of low-cost carriers have at times driven air fares below cost, says Wytkind, and that causes economic chaos for mainline carriers until finally the new entrants go bankrupt in a process that hurts the entire industry.

Major commercial airlines today - such as United Airlines' chief administrative officer Peter McDonald - say high taxes and continuing regulation of the industry are at the crux of the problem. Taxes paid by the airlines, as well as the taxes passengers pay, according to statistics from United, have hit an all-time high. Taxes by airports, the Federal Aviation

Administration and the Department of Homeland Security represent as much as \$60 - or 20 percent - of a \$300 domestic round-trip airline ticket.

United and others have asked the federal government to allow them to operate like private-sector companies as other global industries do.

I think the answer lies not in a government-orchestrated business model for commercial air travel, but in sound, private-sector business strategies just like in any other competitive market.

If Congress would like to see the commercial airline business recover, it must back off and let the free market sort out commercial air's winners and losers. That's really what the airlines and their passengers have been asking for. Let the market speak for itself, and let those commercial carriers with sound business plans soar. Let those who can't make it idle on the tarmac.

Kerry L. Beiser is president and chief executive officer of the Illinois Business Journal. She can be reached at kbeiser@ijonline.com.

FEMA goes rogue and people of the American Bottom suffer

Aug. 15, 2007 has become an important date in local history. It was on that date that representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency



Ortvals

announced that they would be changing their flood maps of the American Bottom - an action, they said, that was triggered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' decision to

decertify our levees. The Bottom, with its 150,000 residents, 50,000 jobs and billions of dollars of developed real estate, would be declared a high-hazard flood zone. This, of course, would have grave consequences as all property owners with federally backed mortgages would be required to buy flood insurance. The price of that flood insurance would skyrocket and would not even be available through FEMA in amounts in excess of \$250,000. Businesses would be hit even harder and new development would grind to a halt as new construction would need to be

elevated out of the projected flood depths, essentially making it unfeasible.

One \$600 million project has since been lost as a result, and now state agencies have begun denying permits to projects in the American Bottom.

For the past two years, local leaders have been scrambling to avert this looming catastrophe. They quickly devised a plan to generate revenue to fund the repairs, got it passed by the legislature and signed by a "no new taxes" governor, crafted and entered into intergovernmental agreements under which the three counties could work together, created a regional flood prevention council, undertook the engineering investigation and hired a chief supervisor to keep everything on track.

Now we find out that the levees had not been decertified by the Corps, that there was no official correspondence between the two agencies prior to that August 2007 meeting, that FEMA had never asked the Corps about the condition of the levees and the Corps had never volunteered any information to the agency. This entire emergency has been the result of FEMA's rogue actions.

FEMA is not an engineering agency. It has no particular knowledge of hydraulics, water flows, groundwater, dams, levees,

relief wells, under seepage or sand boils. It has neither the expertise nor the authority to take such action on its own.

Some have speculated that FEMA targeted the American Bottom as a way to replenish its reserves after getting hammered by the Hurricane Katrina disaster. I'm not one to believe in conspiracy theories. I think it's more likely just a case of federal bureaucrats, insulated from public opinion and operating in near autonomy, overzealously applying their powers without any thought of the consequences.

Last month, a FEMA representative reluctantly came down from Chicago and held a series of meetings with various types of groups regarding the remapping process. The word that was used over and over by attendees to describe him was "arrogant." I've talked to him myself on more than one occasion, and I think that word fits him perfectly.

At one of the meetings, someone asked what FEMA's experience has been relative to property values in an area after it de-accredits its flood protection systems and bestows upon it a high-hazard rating. The FEMA rep said that he didn't know. A telling answer, I think.

No one has ever said that the levees should not be repaired if necessary and maintained to a level that provides the

utmost protection. And, some good things have come out of this process: the levees, which are all of our concern are now being approached from a regional perspective rather than leaving these systems to be dealt with by small and underfunded levee districts. Given time, I'm sure that whatever problems exist with the levees would be fixed. The real threat is not destruction from failed levees; it's decimation by FEMA decree.

From the beginning, local leaders decided to work with the federal agencies and to make Southwestern Illinois a model for the rest of the country. They made that approach clear to both Corps and FEMA reps. You would think that this attitude would have been welcomed and that FEMA would have worked with area leaders to bring about a successful outcome, but that hasn't been the case. Instead, FEMA has responded with sarcasm and arrogance.

FEMA's role should be to work with local leaders to solve problems, not to create them. We need to take whatever steps necessary, including legal, to stop FEMA's reckless course of action and force it to follow the law.

Alan J. Ortvals is vice president and chief operating officer of the Illinois Business Journal. He can be reached at aortvals@ijonline.com.



Write to us

We'd like to hear your opinion

In 300 words or less, write to us on a topic relevant to Southwestern Illinois business readers.

Sign and mail your letters to:
 Illinois Business Journal
 P.O. Box 248, Edwardsville, IL 62025

Commentary

The decade is dead. Long live the new decade?

R.W. Hafer is a regular columnist for the *Illinois Business Journal*. He can be reached at (618)650-2542 or hafer@siue.edu.

I don't know about you, but I am glad the first decade of the century is over. It was not one of the more inspiring



Hafer

times in many respects. The cascade of negatives actually began at the end of the 1990s. Computer scientists warned us that perhaps they had not adequately considered the rollover from 1999 to 2000 in their dating protocols. Millions of dollars and equal hours of programming later, the Y2K bug was a non-event. It did, however, whet our anxiety for what was to come.

While we fretted that our electronic bank accounts would vanish, the stock market soared. The Dow Jones Industrial Average had scrambled to nearly 11,500 by December 1999. Everyone was plowing money into the stock market because, well, because stocks could only go higher, right? (That sentiment would ring familiar later in the decade when we talked about housing prices.) Of course, they didn't. The dot-com bubble burst in early 2000, sending stocks tumbling. The market eventually found a bottom in early 2003. By then, stocks had lost more than a third of their value. The market didn't just fall on its

own, of course. The tragic events of September 11, 2001 nearly brought the economy to a halt. Remember the changes in your behavior following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center? Air flights were canceled, but many of us had already decided to stop flying for awhile. And we just stopped buying. Like the recent crisis, we pulled back our credit cards, not knowing what to expect.

One outcome was that the economy slid into recession in late 2001. Combined with the difficulties in the stock market, the downturn exposed some of the - at least by existing historical standards - largest frauds in business. The year 2002 will be remembered as the year of corporate malfeasance and accounting malpractice. The downfall of Enron, WorldCom, Tyco and Global Crossing grabbed headlines and destroyed lives. Ken, Bernie, Dennis and Gary did the perp walk and received jail time, following legal proceedings that hovered between carnival and public floggings. These men and their associates became the poster boys for corporate greed. We thought them unsurpassable, but we hadn't anticipated the corruptness of Bernie Madoff.

The early years saw the beginnings of two wars that continue. Operation Enduring Freedom began in 2001 as a mission to enter Afghanistan to find and eliminate Osama Bin Laden and his confederates. Both objectives have yet to be accomplished and the fighting continues. Operation Iraqi Freedom began March 20, 2003 with the made-for-television invasion of Iraq. Ostensibly to locate weapons of mass destruction, shock and awe did not

uncover such weapons. Instead, the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was toppled and eventually hanged for his heinous treatment of Iraqi citizens. That war also continues.

Following the mild recession of 2001, the economy expanded without significant momentum. With economic activity somewhat constrained, in 2003 the monetary authorities under the guidance of Alan Greenspan began lowering interest rates to then-historically-low levels. Housing boomed as low interest rates encouraged everyone, good credit and bad, to borrow from lenders happy to provide funds. Homes were routinely flipped as owners bought, held for a short period of time and sold at a substantially higher price. Home prices in some markets increased annually at double-digit rates. Housing replaced the stock market as the source of riches. Your home was your personal ATM.

Official decisions were made that this housing boom should be enjoyed by all. Government officials pushed Fannie and Freddie to extend the benefits of the housing boom to those in the lower end of the income spectrum. Subprime loans were made, with the government's backing, at alarmingly low rates with little worry about mundane things like collateral, ability to support the mortgage or risk of default. Warnings to the contrary, everyone wanted in on the housing boom and the government was happy to oblige.

The housing boom, like its dot-com predecessor, came to a calamitous end in 2007. Housing values tumbled, in some areas shaving as much as 50 percent off of their previous inflated peaks. Once revealed, the accounting and financing

shenanigans that perpetuated the boom, and the use of these risky mortgages as the basis for even riskier derivative securities, sparked an economic and financial crisis the likes of which hadn't been seen since the 1930s.

The stock market responded by losing half of its value. From a peak of about 14,000 in September 2007, the market tanked to around 7,000 in March of 2009. As of this writing, it has recovered about 50 percent this loss. Still, the major market indexes are only about where they started the decade. It isn't known financially as the "lost decade" for nothing.

With the first decade of this century behind us, we will face new challenges. We will confront economic challenge from economic powerhouses like China and India. We also will face external security risks that many counties have realized long before.

The government responded to this latest crisis by intervening in a manner that defies imagination. The Fed again pushed (and is keeping) short-term interest rates to unprecedented low levels. The government has become a dominant factor in the economy. With calls for increased social security programs, more government intervention, increased regulation of industry, ongoing government ownership companies and a move to become a dominant player in the healthcare system, will this decade be remembered for the revival of big government?

R.W. Hafer is a distinguished research professor and chairman of the Department of Economics and Finance at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He is also a scholar of the Show-Me Institute in St. Louis.

Letters

Dear Editor:

The new Illinois Video Gambling Act allows Illinois more video gambling/slot machines (VGMs) than Nevada. This legislation permits establishments pouring alcohol to have VGM "mini-casinos" - including not just bars but also truck stops, restaurants, bowling alleys, airport lounges and other convenience locations. In other jurisdictions, this type of legislation has led to further VGM expansion into other businesses.

Editorials in major Illinois newspapers, such as the *Chicago Tribune* (7-12-09) and the *Chicago Sun-Times* (5-14-09), had opined against legalizing VGMs, and once Gov. Pat Quinn signed the legislation - contrary to his previous promises - the *Chicago Tribune* editorialized against the legislation with the headline "*Repeal video gambling*" (9-11-09). A *Chicago Tribune*/WGN poll (9-9-09) reported that if given the opportunity, 60 percent of voters would vote to ban VGMs. VGM regulation was problematic, as exemplified by the *Daily Herald* headline, "*State video gaming chief says 'almost impossible' to keep mob out*" (11-6-09).

By December, 50 Illinois communities had passed new ordinances against allowing VGMs. Exemplifying this trend, the DuPage County Board voted unanimously to ban VGMs, and Cook County voted 10 to 4 for a ban. These communities noted that by banning VGMs, they would not lose "one penny" of the capital construction funds attached

to the VGM legislation. The bipartisan 1999 U.S. National Gambling Impact Study Commission, sponsored by U.S. Senators Paul Simon and Richard Lugar, highlighted that medical experts designate VGMs as the "crack cocaine" of hooking new addicted gamblers and that VGMs parallel drug addiction with comparably enormous social/taxpayer costs. The commission called for the re-criminalization of VGMs convenient to the public. These conclusions were strongly reconfirmed in the three-volume 2009 U.S. International Gambling Report.

Professor John Warren Kintd
College of Business
University of Illinois
Champaign

Dear Editor:

Construction jobs are not at risk if communities ban video poker machines. Video gambling will neither bring nor reduce road and construction projects for any community.

The state found a way to pay for the capital projects. A bill approved during the veto session allows Illinois to proceed with the sale of bonds for the \$31 billion capital construction plan by borrowing temporarily from the road fund, according to *Crain's Chicago Business* (11-12-09).

While video gambling is one of the funding sources for the Capital Projects Fund, "there is no provision restricting local governments from receiving projects from the Capital Projects Fund, even if that governmental body bans video gaming in their area," according to the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability's *Wagering in Illinois, 2009 Update*.

Since legislators have come up with an alternative funding source and communities that ban video gambling can still get the construction projects, why would anyone invite video gambling into their neighborhoods? Even the chairman of the Illinois Gaming Board, charged with regulating video gambling, said it will be "an almost impossible job" to keep the mob out and protect citizens from the social ills of such pervasive gambling (*Daily Herald*, 11-6-09).

City councils and county boards statewide are discussing video gambling. Du Page, Cook and Lake counties have passed ordinances to ban the machines, and the number of municipalities banning the machines is growing - Naperville, Carolondale, Evanston, Lisle. Contact your city and county officials, and ask them to ban video gambling machines.

Anita Bedell
Executive Director
Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems
Springfield

IBJ Business News

Miles appointed Madison County treasurer

The Madison County Board has approved chairman Alan Dunstan's appointment of Frank Miles as county treasurer, effective Jan. 1. Miles is filling the vacancy created when treasurer Fred Bathon resigned from the position as of Dec. 31, 2009. Miles' appointment runs until December 2010 when the winner of the general election is sworn into office.

Tatum named RASI's Realtor of the Year

The Realtor Association of Southwestern Illinois has bestowed its Realtor of the Year award upon Daniel Tatum Jr., realtor with Strano & Associates Real Estate in O'Fallon. Tatum has been in the real estate business for over 10 years and currently serves as the immediate past president of RASI. Before entering the real estate industry, Tatum dedicated 30 years of his life to the Air Force and retired as a Colonel in 1993.

BARBERMurphy's Zuber earns SIOR designation

Steve Zuber of the BARBERMurphy Group has achieved the SIOR - Industrial Specialist Designation awarded by the Society of Industrial and Office Realtors. Individuals who earn their SIOR designation adhere to the highest levels of accountability and ethical standards. Only the industry's top professionals qualify for the SIOR. Today there are 3,000 SIOR members in 580 markets throughout 26 countries.

FEMA

Continued from page 1

Wilson, project manager for the Corps, reported that a search of Corps records turned up no evidence of notification being sent to FEMA - or any formal correspondence with the agency relative to the American Bottom levees.

"There is no formal correspondence and FEMA made no formal request," Wilson told the council.

Sterman says this lack of correspondence is key as FEMA does not have the expertise nor the jurisdiction to act on its own accord. "By their own rules, the information has to come either from the levee districts or from the Corps of Engineers," he said.

Tom Long, a council member from Madison County, advocated legal action to block FEMA. "It is clearly an arbitrary and capricious act on FEMA's part and we should look at the possibility of injunctive relief," Long said. "We should absolutely drop the hammer on these people."

Sterman says he will wait to receive the formal letter from the Corps regarding its fruitless file search and then discuss legal alternatives with the council's attorney.

"Obviously, taking legal action against

the federal government is not easy and not something that is taken lightly," he said.

St. Clair County Board chairman Mark Kern said FEMA targeted the American Bottom as a way to rebuild its flood insurance reserves after being decimated by Hurricane Katrina. Kern said he would like to see how much revenue FEMA expects to get from flood insurance premiums paid by property owners in the American Bottom.

Since FEMA released its preliminary findings, area leaders have been scrambling to buy the area time to repair the levees. U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello (D-Belleville), U.S. Rep. John Shimkus (R-Collinsville) and Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Illinois) worked together to negotiate an agreement with FEMA in 2008. That agreement essentially said that FEMA would not move forward on re-mapping of the Illinois side of the watershed prior to re-mapping of the Missouri side. That agreement was later codified into law and it was expected that it would give Illinois leaders as much as three additional years to carry out repairs prior to the new maps becoming official.

However, FEMA officials sidestepped the agreement by escalating the review of the Missouri side and approving those levees under the Provisionally Accredited Levee process. That action, in essence, negated the agreement by bringing the Missouri side into alignment with the Illinois side schedule.

In July 2009, Costello introduced a new bill - HR 3415 - that would give areas like the American Bottom up to seven years to carry out necessary repairs before the new maps could become official. That bill has been slow to pick up co-sponsors, however, and no sponsor has come forward yet in the Senate.

Sterman says he thought that taking legal action against FEMA might be another way to buy the area some time.

"In the worst case, what it would do is it would start the clock over again because there are certain requirements that FEMA has to meet," Sterman said, "things like notice to the communities and to the levee districts that they plan to de-accredit the levees."

Sterman says that while the Missouri side was given the opportunity to provide information in support of its levees, the

Illinois side was not. Under the PAL process, the area maintains its accredited status for two years while the local levee districts collect information about their levees that would ultimately support accreditation. Typically, says Sterman, FEMA gives notice to the levee districts that requires them to show that they are in compliance with legal requirements relating to the safety of levees - and the districts have a couple of years to respond. That notice, however, was never sent to the levee districts in the American Bottom.

If FEMA could be forced to follow its own rules relative to levee de-accreditation, the outcome could be very different, according to Sterman.

"It may mean that the condition of the levees is not as severe as has been suggested," Sterman said. "It may mean that we could make some fixes in the next couple of years that would satisfy accreditation. The fact that a federal agency made a decision without any supporting information that is literally costing this region hundreds of millions of dollars...if that is true, we cannot let that stand."

IDOT

Continued from page 1

Rte. 162 and I-55/70, the biggest stimulus project in District 8, continues into 2010.

The \$24 million project began in Fall 2009 and is estimated to be completed in the summer of 2012. Church says IDOT is reconstructing the entire interchange, including the overpass, due to height restrictions and numerous accidents that occurred when tractor trailers traveling along I-55/70 struck the bridge when driving beneath it because the clearance was inadequate. The average daily traffic count at this section of 55/70 is 38,000 vehicles, with approximately 14,000 passing along that section of Rte. 162.

Another District 8 job that continues in 2010, aided by stimulus funding, is the relocation of Illinois Rte. 3 in Venice.

Church says work on this project started in the summer of 2009 and is scheduled to be finished by summer of 2011.

"Eventually, we will build a new Rte. 3 all the way from Venice to East St. Louis," said Church. "This is the first piece of that long-range project." Work on this 3.8-mile, \$4.5 million portion of the Rte. 3 relocation effort is taking place near the recently rehabilitated McKinley Bridge.

Stimulus dollars are also funding the continued construction of a bridge that takes Humbert Road over Illinois 255, as this stretch of 255 - also known as the Alton Bypass - continues to be extended to the north. The 4.3-mile, \$7.5 million project began last fall and is anticipated to reach completion in the summer of 2011.

"We were able to get all our first-round

(of stimulus-funded) jobs out by June 2009," Church said.

Dick Smith, director of planning and programming for all of IDOT, says the number of full-time equivalent jobs created in Illinois due to the stimulus act was impressive.

"Through our most recent report to the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, we have (statewide) 7,826 full-time equivalent jobs created, under contract and under way," said Smith. "That puts Illinois second in the country out of all the DOTs, second only to Texas."

The state of Pennsylvania ranks third out of all the DOTs when it comes to stimulus-funded jobs creation, Smith says, roughly 1,000 jobs fewer than Illinois.

"Our first tier of stimulus projects started in late April," he said. "It took about 60 days after President (Barack) Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act into law for that funding to become available."

The New Mississippi River Bridge Project - labeled a "mega-project" by the federal government - did not receive ARRA funds, according to IDOT, since a criterion for ARRA eligibility was that work on a project could not have already begun before ARRA was signed into law (on Feb. 17, 2009). The new bridge project, a \$640 million effort, is being funded by \$239 million in federal transportation funding, \$313 million in IDOT funding and \$88 million in Missouri DOT funding.

BILL

Continued from page 1

sponsor on SB 223 was Sen. Gary Forby (D-Benton) in Southern Illinois; Forby is chairman of the Illinois Senate Labor Committee.

Maisch says the drive to propel SB 223 clearly came from the Illinois Dept. of Labor.

"The Illinois DOL ran that bill," Maisch said. "We've heard estimates that this (new law) could increase the cost of a construction project by as much as 40 percent. Particularly in downstate Illinois, it will have a serious impact."

Jay Shattuck, executive director of the Illinois Chamber's Employment Law Council, says the Illinois Dept. of Labor determined that SB 43 had to be amended and with regard to TIF districts

located within enterprise zones. "They are interpreting the law to read that if you are receiving a TIF contribution directly - in the form of a grant, for example - instead of a tax credit, then the prevailing wage law will apply," said Shattuck. "My concern with SB 223 was that it was drafted and passed very broadly. The courts are likely going to take a look at it more closely. When the bill was perceived in the process - it was introduced and passed in April 2009 and signed by Gov. Pat Quinn in July - everybody's focus was still on SB 43. No one seemed to want to read SB 223 that way," he added.

If there is a project that a party feels should be part of a contract dictating prevailing wages but that meets with disagreement from the contractor on that

project, Shattuck says it will undoubtedly be one of many scenarios that will wind up in court. "We'll see how many of these go to court, and what the court ultimately decides," he said.

Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld, dean and professor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's School of Labor & Employment Relations, says SB 223 not only covers projects funded with grant money, but also bonds, loans or any other funds made available through the state of Illinois or any of its agencies.

"Prior to the passage of SB 223, some doubt existed within the regulated community as to whether projects financed through public funding mechanisms not specifically identified in the act were 'covered' work," Cutcher-Gershenfeld

said. "This ambiguity resulted in millions of dollars of back wages, penalties and legal costs being incurred by contractors, developers and public bodies. Public Act 96-0058 (SB 223) removes any doubt over whether such work is covered."

Projects funded to any degree by the Illinois Finance Authority, the Illinois Housing Development Authority and regional economic development authorities are also required to pay prevailing wage under this new law effective Jan. 1, he said.

"The Department of Labor also wanted to encourage better notification by public bodies and first-tier contractors that projects are subject to prevailing wage at the outset of the project, before any work is performed," said Cutcher-Gershenfeld.

IBJ Business News

Holland Construction completes LEED-certified Lexus dealership

Holland Construction Services Inc. has finished construction of another new dealership for the Dave Mungenast Automotive Family.

As the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-New Construction-certified Lexus new car dealership in the United States, the new St. Louis facility is the first such facility planned and built from the ground up to adhere to stringent LEED-NC guidelines in design, construction and operation.

The 70,000-square-foot, two-story building is nearly twice the size of the dealership's prior location.

TheBANK of Edwardsville closes \$5 million in housing loans

TheBANK of Edwardsville is the recipient of a top honor from the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Program for closing more than \$5 million in Guarantee Rural Housing Loans during fiscal year 2009. Each year the USDA Rural Development Program recognizes lenders that excel in using the federal agency's guaranteed

loan program to increase home ownership.

SCI Engineering wins quality concrete award

SCI Engineering Inc. is the recipient of the Concrete Council of St. Louis' Quality Control/Quality Assurance award for work on the Elsevier Inc. Midwest regional headquarters project. The project is owned by Duke Realty, and Duke Construction was the general contractor. The awards are given for projects that exemplify esthetics and design, unique use of concrete as a solution and quality workmanship.

Advantage Capital invests \$7.1 million in Allen Brothers

Advantage Capital Partners announces that it has provided \$7.1 million in financing to Chicago-based Allen Brothers Inc., a leading supplier of USDA "Prime" grade beef. The funds will be used to support the company's continued growth, with new job creation projected in coming months.

Advantage Capital closes its first major investment in connection with the recently enacted Illinois New Markets Development program.

Southwestern Illinois Commercial Real Estate Transactions

The Illinois Business Journal is proud to publish commercial real estate transactions recently completed by commercial brokers across Southwestern Illinois.

Alton

◆ Ted Barylske leased 386 sq. ft. at 2850 Homer Adams Pkwy. from Regions Bank. Kunkel Commercial Group Inc. represented both parties.

◆ Ron Grace leased 750 sq. ft. at 2850 Homer Adams Pkwy. from Regions Bank. Kunkel Commercial Group Inc. represented both parties.

Belleville

◆ West Pine Partnership LLP and W.K. Investment Corp. leased a 1,200-sq.-ft. retail bay at 651 Carlyle Ave. to Klene Tax LLC, dba Liberty Tax Service. Johnson Properties Inc. represented the lessor.

Cahokia

◆ Banco Popular North America sold a 3,140-sq.-ft. commercial building at 3325/3327 Mississippi Ave. to B&H Real Estate Ventures LLC. Johnson Properties Inc. represented both parties.

Collinsville

◆ Abell Real Estate Partnership sold a 12,000-sq.-ft. retail/office building located at 101 United Dr. to RETKO Group LLC. Johnson Properties Inc. represented the seller.

◆ Creating Smiles Family & Cosmetic Dentistry LLC leased 1,800 sq. ft. at 101 United Dr. from RETKO Group LLC. Bob Anna of Johnson Properties Inc. represented the lessee.

Glen Carbon

◆ TheBANK of Edwardsville Trust sold a commercial lot on Center Grove Rd. to John Romann and Sandra Holly Romann. Johnson Properties Inc. represented both parties.

Hamel

◆ TheBANK of Edwardsville Trust sold 2.5 acres of commercial land at I-55/70 and Illinois Rte. 140 to Pearl Family Partnership. Johnson Properties Inc. represented both parties.

◆ TheBANK of Edwardsville Trust sold 21.8 acres of commercial land at I-55/70 and Illinois Rte. 140 to Boeker Family Limited Partnership. Johnson Properties Inc. represented both parties.

O'Fallon

◆ Triad Investments LLC sold a 10,000-sq.-ft. commercial building at 702 East Hwy. 50 to Ned's Properties LLC. Johnson Properties Inc. represented the seller and Dave Kunkel of Kunkel Commercial Group Inc. represented the buyer.

◆ Power Hockey LLC leased 918 sq. ft. at 220 East State St. in O'Fallon from JAG Inc. Kunkel Commercial Group Inc. represented both parties.

◆ Doreen Kelly Forbes leased 700 sq. ft. at 1214 Paragon Dr. from JRG Holdings-Belleville LLC. Kunkel Commercial Group Inc. represented both parties.

Make *Contacts* here for as little as \$70* a month

If you'd like 18,500 business leaders to see your card here, contact Al Orbals at (618) 659-1997 or aorbals@ibjonline.com

T.A.C. COLLECTIONS, INC.
CASH FLOW MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Jason Hudson
District Sales and Marketing Manager
1210 Towanda Plaza
Bloomington, Illinois 61701
(Cell) 630-346-6194 · 800-STOP-LOSS
Email: jhudson@taccorp.com



FLAT-RATE COLLECTIONS **OFFICES NATIONWIDE**

Jonathan D. Ferry
Economic Development Director



City of Granite City, Illinois
2000 Edison Ave., Granite City, Illinois 62040-4513

Office: 618-452-6213 Cell: 618-779-2554
Fax: 618-452-6236 E-Mail: jferry@granitecity.illinois.gov
www.granitecity.illinois.gov/econdev

"OVER 30 YEARS OF QUALITY WORK"
FREE ESTIMATES

Atlanta Asphalt
Asphalt Paving Professionals

COMMERCIAL • RESIDENTIAL • INDUSTRIAL
SUBDIVISIONS • TENNIS COURTS
PARKING LOTS • SCHOOL YARDS • DRIVEWAYS

(618) 233-1955 • FAX (618) 233-1985

624 ATLANTA DRIVE
BELLEVILLE, IL 62220

SCOTT REICHERT

Think it. Be it.

SWIC.edu

866-942-SWIC (7942)



SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS COLLEGE

Belleville Campus • Sam Wolf Granite City Campus • Red Bud Campus

Express
EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS

P 618-288-8011
F 618-288-8071

"Serving the entire Metro East area"

**20 Junction Drive West
Glen Carbon, IL 62034**

Marc.voegele@expresspros.com
www.expresspros.com

Helping investors in Southwestern Illinois for over 30 years

Doug Hartmann Sr.
CCIM, CPM, CRB, CRS



(618) 570-1247 cell
Hartmann Realtors

2505 Vandalia, Collinsville, IL 62234 (618)344-7900

Integrated Marketing Communications.
Social Media. Brand Management. Public Relations.



Manage. Message. Market.

Let's meet. Call today.

618.281.6648
marketcity.com



Bridging the Gap Between Southwestern Illinois & St. Louis

David R. Wittenauer, CCIM
618.281.8800


With offices in:
Southwestern Illinois • Clayton • Chesterfield
Serving 107 markets across the US

100 North Main Street
Collinsville, IL 62236
Phone: 618.281.8800 • Fax: 618.281.8005
www.gundakercommercial.com

Paul W. Mann
Community Development/TIF Director

918-346-5200 X229
FAX: 618-345-3658
E-mail: pmann@ci.collinsville.il.us
Web Site: http://ci.collinsville.il.us



The City of Collinsville
125 South Center Street • Collinsville, Illinois 62234

Sales - Leasing 

River Bend
COMMERCIAL DIVISION

DENNIS E. DUGAN
(618) 791-8389
ddugan@remax.net

2375F Homer Adams Pkwy. Alton, Illinois 62002 (618) 462-5300
www.ddugan.com

Experience - Dedication Results

Specializing in Commercial Real Estate



CONTACT: **Dave Kunkel**
dave@kunkelcommercial.com
618.632.8200
www.kunkelcommercial.com

If you'd like 18,500 business leaders to see your card here, contact Al Orbals at (618) 659-1997 or aorbals@ibjonline.com

*rate per ad on 12-month contract

Commercial • Industrial • Investment Properties

We stand behind
every transaction
from listing to
closing.



BARBERMurphy
GROUP

We're All About Southern Illinois

www.barbermurphy.com

618.277.4400 • 221 West Pointe Drive, Suite 7, Swansea, IL 62226