

Spavia



PHOTO BY BEN ROMANG



Laura Carmody opened Spavia Springfield in late 2018 with the mission of making a positive impact on the community, one guest at a time.

“Three years later, we continue to provide an exceptional experience to guests through our massages, facials and other body treatments, along with resort-quality amenities such as robes, warm neck pillows, customized music, teas, showers and private lockers,” she said. “Along with me, as the owner, our leadership team is comprised of Sauscha, spa manager; and Andrea, lead massage therapist.”

Treatments offered at Spavia include massage therapy, skin care, body treatments, beauty treatments and waxing. Customers may also purchase memberships to the spa in essential, premier and ultimate packages. Spavia’s peaceful, resort-like setting helps customers relax, get centered and renew every month.

According to Carmody, Spavia Springfield is all about focusing on the needs of the customer. Each one selects the treatments

that best suit their needs. The therapists and estheticians care about the comfort of their guests and provide each spa treatment in the most personalized, professional manner. With the Spavia retreat room, each guest is provided with a spa robe, spa sandals and a warmed aromatherapy neck pillow for the ultimate in rest and relaxation.

Carmody feels that Spavia is a special part of the Springfield community for a number of reasons. “We are committed to the betterment of our team and our community. Spavia provides a relaxing and supportive environment for our team, with generous breaks and complementary snacks,” she said. “We also offer a revenue sharing program to recognize each person’s contribution to our success; when we win – they win.”

Each September, the company selects an area nonprofit organization, promotes its cause on the company’s social media platforms and donates a percentage of revenue from treatments to the nonprofit’s cause.

Working at Spavia has been a rewarding

experience for Carmody, mostly because of the impact the organization has had on their clients. “The most rewarding component of working at Spavia is making a positive impact on the lives of our members and guests,” she said. “It feels good to promote an environment of true relaxation. We help our members and guests relax, get centered and renew.”

Carmody is excited to report that Spavia has grown. “Over the past year, our team has grown from 12 to 18 people,” she said. “We have added a new spa manager, Sauscha, who has done an excellent job in welcoming, organizing and developing the team and the spa.”

Carmody is proud of everything the company has accomplished since its inception and sees continued success in the future.

“Spavia is successful because of our amazing team,” she said. “Our primary goal for 2022 is to grow and develop as a team and as a respected business in our community.”



American Legion Post 32

PHOTO BY BEN ROMANG



The American Legion was chartered in 1919 as a patriotic veterans' organization which focused on service to United States veterans, servicemembers and communities. The Legion evolved from a group of World War I veterans into one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the country. Membership currently stands at close to two million people with more than 13,000 posts.

The American Legion Post 32 has been stationed in three locations since forming more than 100 years ago. "Our first location was 625 S. Second St. in Springfield," said Mike Watson, finance officer and volunteer for American Legion Post 32. "In 1982, we moved downtown to 410 S. Fifth St./505 American Legion Ave., where we remained until 2007 when we moved to our present location, 1120 Sangamon Ave. in Springfield."

American Legion Post 32 operates a bar, video gaming and The Mess Hall Restaurant, all of which are open to the public. The restaurant is open for both lunch and

dinner and offers a wide variety of food and drinks. They also rent out space and are available for buffet-style catering for 25 or more people.

"The team that works with us at American Legion Post 32 and The Mess Hall Restaurant have a great respect and love for veterans," said Watson. "They also enjoy being on the north end of Springfield where you have a more relaxed and friendly attitude. This is where our team knows everyone by name."

There are a number of reasons members enjoy being a part of The American Legion Post 32. Meeting and helping to assist veterans and their families is a proud moment each time any member experiences that honor. Also, members are proud to work with the many great people who frequent the Mess Hall Restaurant, along with the bar and the video gaming area.

The COVID-19 pandemic put a strain on a number of businesses over the past couple

years, but The American Legion Post 32 was able to weather the storm and stay strong during these tough times.

"We stayed open and kept our team working all through the pandemic, which has a lot to do with our veterans, their families and the many, many loyal people who continued to patronize The Mess Hall Restaurant, even when we only had drive-through service," said Watson. That by itself was an incredible accomplishment and something of which Watson and the rest of the post's members are proud.

Having been around for more than a century, The American Legion Post 32 plans to continue its work with this country's veterans into the future.

"We plan to continue to put out the best food and experience for our veterans and our customers at the lowest cost to them possible," said Watson. "And we will continue to be an active supporter for veterans and for Springfield and the north end."

SCHEELS



PHOTO BY BEN ROMANG



SCHEELS opened its Springfield store in 2011, a 200,000-square-foot retail shopping experience that showcases Illinois' largest selection of sports, sportswear and footwear under one roof.

According to Nikki Monari, marketing leader, "Unlike a typical sporting goods store or department store, the Springfield SCHEELS is a collection of entertainment venues; women's, men's and kids' shops; as well as sport and game shops," she said. The store stocks leading brands such as Nike, Adidas, Under Armour, Patagonia and The North Face, plus the largest gun and hunting selection in Illinois, ranging from everyday shooters to collectible firearms.

"With a team of experts focused on helping customers follow their passions, at SCHEELS you'll discover high-quality sports apparel brands for men, women and youth," Monari said.

In addition to specialty shops and services, the SCHEELS shopping experience includes a 65-foot Ferris wheel inside the store for customers to ride and a 16,000-gallon saltwater

aquarium. The Springfield SCHEELS also features a wildlife mountain, historical walk of United States presidents, rollerball bowling lanes, giant arcade games, a shooting gallery and a gift lodge with home furnishings and decorations.

As an employee-owned, privately held business, SCHEELS owes its consistent success to its empowered associates, leaders and partners who make decisions for their store and the entire company.

"As proud employee-owners, we all have a voice and thrive on a collaboration to succeed," said Monari. "SCHEELS is a family that takes pride in our people, our store and our community. Not only do we get to provide our customers with a unique shopping experience, we provide our associates with hands-on training to enhance their knowledge and allow them to provide the best possible experiences for our customers. At SCHEELS we work hard, but we also play hard."

According to Monari, SCHEELS provides endless opportunities to its employees. "The company takes pride in the store and their associates like no other. It's so great to work for

a company that cares about their customers, their associates and the community that they serve," she said.

At SCHEELS, employees make it their mission to be active members in the Springfield community through numerous forms of outreach and volunteerism. "We take pride in being able to improve the lives of others. That's why we donate our time, energy and resources to building up and supporting the members and organizations in our community," said Monari, who noted that associates volunteer both time and resources. SCHEELS has donated more than \$150,000 back to Springfield-area communities.

SCHEELS celebrated 10 years in the Springfield community last year, and the company as a whole was selected as a 2022 Glassdoor 100 Best Places to Work, along with being a Forbes America's Best Large Employers winner.

"Our goal for the future is to be the best retailer in the eyes of customers, associates and business partners," Monari said.



PHOTO BY BEN ROMANG

Prairie Engineers



Prairie Engineers, a woman-owned firm, was founded in 2010 and has grown to 70 people and eight offices. Headquartered in Columbia, Illinois, the firm also has offices in Springfield, Peoria, Hillsboro and Champaign, along with Hazelwood, Missouri, and Keokuk, Iowa, plus a recent addition in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

"Prairie Engineers is a team of forward-thinking engineers, surveyors and scientists solving problems for agencies that improve and preserve public works across the United States," said Lisa Kramer, president and founder of Prairie Engineers. "We work primarily for federal and state governments, utilities and industry providing services including surveying and mapping; civil site, transportation and water resources engineering; and structural, mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineering."

As a relatively young firm with a vision for growth, Prairie Engineers recognized the need to offer exceptional benefits and opportunities to attract the best and most talented engineers, surveyors and scientists. "We have invested heavily in growing the right group of employees with the right attitude," said Kramer. "We are disciplined about what clients we serve, and we serve them well, which makes our work lives easier and our employees can enjoy a sense of accomplishment."

Over the past 12 years, Prairie Engineers has been successful in recruiting qualified engineers. "Flexibility is a word that defines us, with policies in place to encourage work-life balance and mentoring at all career levels so that employees can grow to their fullest potential," said Kramer. "We have allowed our staff to work remotely since well before COVID-19 came along, we share half of our profits with our staff each year, we offer more paid time off than most and we offer fully employer-paid medical insurance for our staff members."

In the past year, Prairie Engineers added 20 staff members and opened its first office outside of the Midwest. The firm worked on some notable projects, including the completion of a boundary survey of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio and started a new boundary survey of Joint Base Andrews, a military facility in Maryland where Air Force One is hangared.

The firm also had several projects in the Springfield area. "We completed design work for mechanical upgrades at Camp Lincoln in Springfield for the Illinois National Guard and started working on plumbing renovations at UIS, both through the Illinois Capital Development Board," said Kramer. "We started the design of intersection improvements at the Sangamon Avenue and Dirksen Parkway

intersection in Springfield for the Illinois Department of Transportation."

Prairie Engineers reorganized its management structure in 2021 to better focus on company priorities, most notably their clients and employees.

"As we have grown over the last 10 years from a one-person company to a very diverse 70-person company with eight offices, we have grown our talents and offerings along the way," said Kramer. "We recognized the need for better mentoring of our staff and divided them into technical discipline groups focusing on our technical practices of infrastructure engineering, facilities engineering and geospatial."

The company also recognized the need to better understand and respond to clients and organized its business development and project management functions into four market groups – federal government, state and local government, departments of transportation, and utilities and industry.

This new organizational structure has served Prairie Engineering well over the past year and has enabled further growth of the company.

"We plan to continue growing both in size and geography to continue offering our employees challenging projects they can be proud to work on."

Express Employment Professionals



PHOTO BY BEN ROMANG



Jim and Carole Britton started a staffing business in 1980 and became the Springfield franchisees for Express Employment Professionals in 1983. Since that time a lot has changed, but one thing that remains the same is the company's people-first approach.

"We believe any organization is only as good as the people that work there," said Don Adams, business development manager. Express is a franchised system of more than 800 offices worldwide. The Springfield office routinely ranks within the top 10.

The employees of Express Employment Professionals are a primary reason the company has remained successful for nearly 40 years. "Kayla Edwards, JT Britton and Zachary Britton continue to keep the vision fresh, helping as many people as possible find good jobs by helping as many clients as possible find good people," said Adams. "We help companies find people in a manner that's quicker, easier and more reliable. We also help people find jobs at no cost to the job seeker."

As one of the largest 10 private employers in Sangamon County, Express routinely pays more than 500 associates working at over

100 different companies. "Staff and leaders at Express believe we are the best place to work because of the positive effects we have on thousands of lives across central Illinois," said Adams. "This opportunity to impact such a broad group of central Illinois residents with good-paying, long-term employment, allows us to provide hope and possibility to the communities we serve."

Adams noted, "At this year's International Leadership Conference, Express was recognized at the national level for serving a record-setting number of businesses and associates, resulting in the highest number of people served in long-term, core additions to our clients' organizations."

According to Adams, one of the best parts about working at Express is the daily coaching and advice they are able to provide clients and associates. Express instills its team with world-class training and development that allows all employees to add in a special blend of Springfield service. "This creates a team-based approach, focused on excellent service to both our associates and business partners," said Adams.

One way that the company was able to

achieve such a high level of employee performance was through the Stimulus of Hope campaign. This campaign was championed by Express employees Kirk Considine, Don Adams and Michael Thomas.

"The campaign focused on building relationships with our community partners to help people either gain employment or to better their current employment situation," said Adams. "This initiative resulted in hundreds of conversations across dozens of community partners and is still producing positive effects across Sangamon County and beyond."

The primary goals of Express are to be the place job seekers turn to when they need to find employment and the place companies rely on when they need to find qualified candidates.

"We believe that by doing more for the people we serve, we can have a greater positive impact on the community," said Adams. "As an employer of choice, we understand both the opportunity and responsibility to help Springfield grow through the acquisition of good-paying jobs that offer a positive work-life balance and room for career growth."



United Community Bank's Best Places to Work in Central Illinois

United Community Bank is pleased to bring our community the Best Places to Work awards program. Since 2008, in partnership with the Springfield Business Journal, UCB has presented over forty five companies with this honor and hundreds more have been nominated by their employees. Enclosed on these pages is a look back at a decade of distinction.

2022



2021



2020



2019



2018



2017



2016



2015



2014



2013



For a full list of past recipients please visit: ucbbank.com/bptw