



MEDP'S NewsFlash

JANUARY 2012

www.macoupinpartners.com

Shop BenGil revealed to local business owners



TJ Allan, co-founder of Shop BenGil, explains to business owners it is all about convenience.

Shop BenGil is the first online e-commerce site in Macoupin County that will benefit the shop local initiative as well as support the community. The site, which has been under creation for the last 16 months, is in the final stages before launch and about 80% complete. Launching is planned for early February in 2012, but the site was revealed to local business owners on Thursday, December 8 at Ageless Fitness Center.

Local business owners and potential business owners were

invited to witness the revealing of the first ever e-commerce 'mall' site in Macoupin County as Shop BenGil is going to be working with these local business owners in the last 2 building months to get their virtual store front available on the site.

E-commerce is an important component to business development, therefore Shop BenGil and Macoupin Economic Development Partnership will be teaming up to aid merchants in this essential on-line transition. **BenGil** continued on page 3



MEDP December Membership Meeting held at Shipman Elevator Company

E-Market Your Business in 2012

Free Email Marketing Workshop Presented by Madison Communications and MEDP

Madison Communications and Macoupin Economic Development Partnership would like to support local businesses by providing a free email marketing workshop January 18 from 3pm-5pm at Madison located at 21668 Double Arch Rd, Staunton.

This informative "E-Retailing" presentation will demonstrate how you can create highly effective and professional emails that get results. Email marketing is an effective, affordable, and easy-to-use way to enhance your business image and com-

municate with your customers and potential clients.

Topics to be covered include:

- What is permission-based email marketing?
- How to create your list of email addresses
- Tips on getting your emails opened.
- Best practices in email marketing.
- Tracking results and what to do with this information.

Guest speaker Steve Robinson is Constant Contact's small business expert in Illinois and **Email** continued on page 6

Shipman Elevator Co. Tour



Bart Baker treats MEDP members and guests to a interior/exterior tour of Shipman Elevator Company. The company recently expanded their main office building.



SEC employees Jeff Hunn and Dean Allen lead guests through out-buildings that contain applicators, seeds and fertilizers.



Jeff Hunn of SEC talks of the vast intelligence of farming today from soil tests to planters which adjust seed amounts per soil quality. Shown here with Richard Schien of Karmak and Jason Medford of Frontier Communications.

Is Starting a Business Right for You?

The SCORE Simple Steps Series Workshops can help you make a smart start.

Macoupin Economic Development Partnership will host at 111 W. Main Street, Staunton, IL. (Macoupin County)

The SCORE Simple Steps Series Workshops will help you:

- § Define and evaluate your ideas.
- § Develop a marketing strategy.
- § Identify the best ways to fund your startup.
- § Turn your idea into action with tools and templates.
- § Get useful and helpful mentoring sessions.
- § Connect with other entrepreneurs.

Jump-start your business idea with the SCORE Simple Steps Series Workshops.

Successful and experienced executives will help you reach “go or no-go” decision for starting a business.

Make a smart start. Attend the SCORE Simple Steps Series Workshops and begin your journey for small business success.

Sign-up

Get started today. Reserve your spot now!

The SCORE Simple Steps Series

FOUR Workshops are available for \$31.25 each. The first workshop is free.

You get the whole series for \$125.00.

Not sure if the SCORE Simple Steps Series is for you? Call (618 830 - 9069) or visit (<http://swillinois.score.org>) for more information or to sign-up. MEDP 111 W. Main Street, Staunton, IL. 6:00 – 8:30 pm. February 1, 2012. Registration: 618 467 - 2280

Grant Applications for Composting Projects Due January 13, 2012

DCEO’s Food Scrap Composting Revitalization and Advancement Program (F-SCRAP) is now soliciting projects and will accept formal grant applications until January 13, 2012. Grants are available to assist local governments, for-profit and not-for-profit businesses and organizations with their food scrap collection and processing efforts. Projects that demonstrate public economic benefits, such as job creation, will be given priority.

Grant funds are made available from the Illinois Solid Waste Management Fund and DCEO may award grants up to \$250,000 for any one project. Applicants must provide a minimum 10% cash match of the total project costs. Grant funds may only be used to purchase project-related capital equipment such as collection, processing or handling equipment and project-necessary expansion and modernization costs.

This solicitation is expected to be highly competitive and entities interested in submitting an application are encouraged to carefully read the Request-for-Application (RFA) document, which can be downloaded from DCEO’s Recycling and Waste Reduction Division’s Web site: www.illinoisrecycles.com.

For additional information and questions, please contact David E. Smith, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Energy Office - Recycling Programs 500 East Monroe, Ridgely Building 12th Floor, Springfield, Illinois 62701-1643; Phone: 217-785-2006, Fax: 217-785-2618, David.E.Smith@illinois.gov

BenGil continued from page 1 tion. MEDP will be expanding its business service offerings in 2012; e-commerce, business marketing, development and access to capital will all play key components.

“Every small business needs to take advantage of this opportunity to reach a larger customer base and increase sales,” Executive Director Shari Albrecht opened. “Successful small businesses adapt to their customer needs; virtual storefronts are that need.”

TJ Allan, co-founder, explained that a web presence is so crucial to the vitality of a small business these days and his main initiative was to create a venue that would be user friendly, easy to operate and increase sales of merchants in the community.

“I think many of our businesses are missing sales because we are only open 8am-5pm which is the regular work shift,” Allan explained, “Therefore we are missing the people that are at work with all the money.” The web presence will be the middle-man in this equation and will allow customers the convenience to shop local establishments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.

The solution to bring customers back to shopping local is convenience and according to Allan, we think we have the solution. Shop BenGil is going to be no different than a shopping mall and essentially, that is all it is. All of the stores will be posted on one site and consumers will be able to purchase products from any local store with just a few clicks.

One debit card or credit card transaction can get you a toy from Torpani's or a decoration from Sullivan's and even a walker from Michelle's to a cheesecake from CP's Five & Dine. “Everyone recognizes the shop local drive, but for some odd reason most of us are not



shopping local,” Allan went on to say, “I really think it comes down to convenience and this is the perfect time to get our stores on the internet and selling online through an e-commerce channel.”

An e-commerce site compared to a brick and mortar store will hopefully expand the selection and lower expenses. As long as business owners get their products online, customers can shop their products at any time of the day or year. Business owners will now be able to offer more products online since they will be able to tell what products are popular and not.

Business owners watched as Allan revealed the site to them first hand.

“We are not trying to change your business model,” Allan noted, “Brick and mortar stores are essential to downtown Gillespie, but we believe in a hybrid type of business which will combine a brick and mortar store with an e-commerce site and we think this site will be the solution.”

Business owners will be able to see what customers are choosing to buy and what they are not and offer to ship the purchased items out or have them available for pickup.

People shop local because they trust the business owners. The BenGil area is the pilot segment of this e-commerce platform. Eventually this model will incorporate other communities and additional facets

creating a new hybrid business model.

Business owners will be able to manage their own products as well as all pictures and/or videos. Shop BenGil will take 5% off each product ordered and use that small amount of money to pay their merchant accounts. Anything rest will be pulled together and used for advertising to advertise the site which will stair step down to advertising for all the businesses featured on the site.

“I applaud any business that is uptown right now,” TJ Allan closed, “I know for a fact Ageless would have been out of business in 6 months if we would have stayed up town on Main Street.” Allan went on to say he realizes the cost that brick and mortar stores have and Shop BenGil will hopefully relieve some of that. If a business can build their foot traffic online, hopefully they can eventually move into a store front in downtown Gillespie.

All the sales tax generated through the Shop BenGil will go back into the community and this is just another way that it will be beneficial to everyone.

“This is really a good example of a public/private partnership,” Albrecht closed, “MEDP is very proud to work with Shop BenGil. This approach to business development is ground-breaking and we are very excited to bring this to local business owners.”

Source: The BenGil Post

Electronic Filing for Businesses

Effective for tax years ending on or after December 31, 2011, corporations, including S corporations, that are required to file their federal Forms U.S. 1120 and U.S. 1120S income tax returns by electronic means, are now required to file their Illinois returns through the IRS and Illinois Modernized Electronic Filing program (MeF). The Illinois MeF program currently supports the

- 2009 Form IL-1120, Corporation Income and Replacement Tax Return, and schedules (excluding unitary filings)
- 2010 Form IL-1120, and all schedules (including all unitary filings)
- 2011 Form IL-1120 and all schedules (in testing)
- 2011 Form IL-1120-ST, Small Business Replacement Tax Return, and all schedules (in testing)

In the event that you are required to file electronically for federal purposes and the Illinois MeF program does not support your return type, you are exempt from the requirement until such a time that we are prepared to include your return type (i.e., partnerships, trusts and estates, exempt organizations, composite returns, pass-through entities). Illinois MeF does not support any amended returns. Therefore, these returns are exempt from the new requirements.

Beginning August 2010, the Department of Revenue began accepting the IL-1120 and Schedules electronically

Special Thanks to...

Frontier Communications for use of their projector screen.

Benld Public Library for use of their projector

IDOT Launches Diversity Website to Promote Business and Employment Opportunities

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) unveiled a new diversity website to boost communication of employment and contracting opportunities for prospective minority workers and minority-owned and women-owned firms in Illinois.

Along with improved navigation and usability, the site offers each visitor access to current statistics and specifications on construction projects, hiring and recruiting efforts. It also includes an interactive events

calendar, a picture slideshow, informative video clips and a live Twitter feed to provide diversity-related news in real time.

For more information on diversity news and updates, visit www.diversity.dot.illinois.gov. For a detailed video describing the Web site and its many features, visit IDOT's YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/IllinoisDOT>. A direct link is: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEbqKTy6Tus>

NLRB Extends Deadline to January 31, 2012

The National Labor Relations Board has postponed the implementation date for its new notice-posting rule by more than two months in order to allow for enhanced education and outreach to employers, particularly those who operate small and medium sized businesses. The new effective date of the rule is January 31, 2012.

Most private sector employers will be required to post the 11X17 inch notice, which is available at no cost from the NLRB through its website either by downloading and print-

ing, or by ordering a print in the mail. The poster which describes employee rights under the national Labor Relations Act is now available for free download from the NLRB website at www.nlr.gov/poster.

For further information about the posting, including a detailed discussion of which employers are covered by the NLRB, and what to do if a substantial share of the workplace speaks a language other than English, please see the NLRB's Frequently Asked Questions.

Electronics Disposal Ban Takes Effect Jan. 1

Beginning January 1, it will no longer be legal for individuals to dispose of unwanted electronics in their regular trash. Discarded electronics, including computers, monitors, electronic keyboards, scanners, fax machines and many other electronic devices, must now be taken to a registered recycler for proper management. It will be illegal for the consumer to dispose of them in the trash and it will be illegal for Illinois landfills to accept them.

The Illinois Electronic Products Recycling and Reuse Act, which took effect in 2008, required manufacturers to establish a recycling program for discarded and unwanted electric products, if they sell their products in Illinois. This newest phase will include individual citizens in the effort to keep electronics, which contain a variety of potentially toxic contaminants, out of the state's 48 active landfills. The Illinois EPA maintains a web site at: <http://www.epa.state.il.us/land/electronic-waste-recycling/index.html>, which explains requirements for individuals and for manufacturers, a list of registered collectors, as well as a complete listing of all electronic items included in the ban.



MEDP, Litchfield ED and Montgomery ED joined forces for a Workforce Development Roundtable held November 17. The Roundtable came out of a regional labor survey conducted by Ameren. A summary of this survey was given, followed by current workforce efforts. Workforce markets were identified and action items were defined.

Archived W-2 Seminar Now Online

The Reporting of Employer-Sponsored Health Plan Coverage on Form W-2 (Affordable Care Act Provision 9002) webinar will explain what employers and employees need to know about the provision including:

- What changes employees will see in their Form W-2
- When employers must begin reporting the benefits on the Form W-2
- Transition relief for certain employers, plans, and situations
- Which employers need to include the benefits on the Form W-2
- How employers report the benefits on the Form W-2
- What valuation methods employers can use to determine the amounts to report on the Form W-2

Needing to Buy or Sell Commercial Property? Let MEDP Help You!

We list available commercial buildings and sites for **FREE** on our LOIS database used by sites selectors nationwide.

Need a building or site, check out macoupinpartners.com and click 'LocationOne Building/Sites' for a full list of Macoupin properties

Agents and Owners Please Contact MEDP Today!

618-409-6044

ActOnEnergy® Program

Upcoming Online Training Events

Over the next three months the Ameren Illinois ActOnEnergy® program will be offering FREE online training events that you can access from the comfort of your desk.

These training events are designed to help businesses become more knowledgeable about energy efficiency. For more information on all ActOnEnergy training events, go to the Education and Training page at ActOnEnergy.com.

Please see below for monthly on-line training options.

January Online Training Events

Topic: Variable Frequency Drives: Energy Efficiency Opportunities

Speaker: David Gibson, PE, LEED, Senior Technical Advisor with SAIC, an ActOnEnergy Partner

Date: Wednesday, January 11, 2012

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Earn 1.0 CE Hours

The free, one-hour training event will cover the following topics:

- How do VFDs work?
- How VFDs help save energy
- Applications of pumps and fans for energy efficiency
- ActOnEnergy standard and custom incentives for VFDs

Topic: Do-It-Yourself Energy Audits

Speaker: Don Fournier, Managing Director, SEDAC

Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2012

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Earn 1.0 CE Hours

The free, one-hour training event will cover the following topics:

- Different Levels of Audits
- Benchmarking and Energy Bill Analysis

- Walk-Through Survey
- Energy Survey and Analysis
- Detailed Analysis of Capital Intensive Modifications
- Web-based Resources for Energy Audits
- Audit Assistance Available

February Online Training Event

Topic: Implementing Energy-Efficient HVAC Controls

Speaker: Reinhard Seidl, a Principal at Taylor Engineering
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2012

Time: noon to 1:00 p.m.

Earn 1.0 CE Hours

The free, one-hour training event will cover the following topics:

- Getting your building benchmarked
- Performing a building audit
- Choosing a controls platform
- Getting you utility involved
- Selecting a provider
- Training your staff
- Examples

To register for any of these classes please visit ameren.com

Email continued from page 1 Wisconsin. A knowledgeable marketing expert with 30 years of experience, Steve has helped thousands of small businesses, associations, and nonprofits develop and implement effective email marketing, social media and online survey strategies. A popular speaker and educator, Steve gives small businesses and nonprofits the tools, techniques, and strategies they need to grow and expand their business and to maximize the power of relationship marketing.

To register online visit http://gomadison.com/events/E-Retail_Business_Workshop or call Courtney Wood (MEDP) 618-409-6044.

MEDP's First Lenders Forum December 9

Sponsored by Macoupin County Board



Andrew Hamilton from Central Illinois Economic Development Authority and Matthew Jennings (not pictured) from DCEO spoke to Macoupin County Financial institutions about viable program offerings.



Invited Financial institutions, CIEDA members and guests enjoyed a catered lunch at Top of the Town in Staunton provided the Macoupin County Board.

Want to see more photos from our MEDP events...

- * Shipman Elevator Tour
- * Workforce Development Roundtable
- * Lenders Forum
- * Energy Efficiency Grant
- * Mayor's Council & More

Check out our
Flickr Photostream at
macoupinpartners.com

Mayor's Council November 30 - Guest Speaker PGAV Planners



Carlinville Mayor Bob Schwab (standing) welcomed all in attendance to the meeting held at Salsa Grill on the Square.



Mike Hemmer (right) of PGAV Planners takes a moment before the presentation to speak with Staunton Mayor Craig Neuhaus and Alderman Herb Sievers.

Here Mayors from Benld, Virden, Mt. Olive and Gillespie discuss community issues during the networking portion of the evening. Guest Speaker, Mike Hemmer spoke about community planning opportunities, downtown revitalization among some of the services PGAV offers.

MEDP Membership Renewals

Thank you to our members who have renewed for 2012

(October 27 - December 31, 2011)

Macoupin County

Macoupin County Housing Authority

Main Street Florist

Village of Brighton

City of Bunker Hill

City of Staunton

City of Gillespie

City of Mt. Olive

Village of Modesto

Village of Scottville

City of Carlinville

Seniker Construction & Appraisal

Meehan's IGA

Turney's Heating/Cooling

Thinking about joining MEDP...

Contact Brian Zilm 217.825.7042



- Great Networking Opportunities
- Business Assistance at Every Phase
- Business Recruitment & Retention Program
- Macoupin Matters - Shop Local Effort
- Top 25, Under 45 Macoupin Made Young Leader Awards Program
- Lobby Day
- Legislative Reception
- Coffee & Commerce (Business Leader Breakfasts)
- Funding Forum
- Advertise commercial property for free

Come grow with the organization that seeks to nurture and build businesses in Macoupin County.

macoupinpartners.com

Small Business Tax Workshops and Webinars

Small business workshops are designed to help the small business owner understand and fulfill their Federal Tax responsibilities. Workshops are sponsored and presented by IRS partners who are Federal Tax specialists. Workshop topics vary from a general overview of taxes to more specific topics such as recordkeeping and retirement plans. Although most are free, some workshops have fees associated with them. Any fees charged for a workshop are paid to the sponsoring organization, not the IRS.



Winery Owner Ken Snider, Benld Mayor Jeff Hendricks and MEDP Executive Director Shari Albrecht.



MEDP Executive Director Shari Albrecht, Staunton Mayor Craig Neuhaus with Bill Miller and Becky Painter of Bill's IGA.

MEDP Assists New Winery & Staunton Grocery Store

Ken Snider and Bill's IGA were recently awarded and approved and awarded Build Macoupin County Energy Efficiency Grant funds. The grant, announced in January, was made available to assist businesses and commercial building owners located in Macoupin County to make needed improvements to their structures. Macoupin Economic Development Partnership administers the grant; focusing on both reduction of energy consumption and job creation.

Ken Snider was awarded \$5,000 for his HVAC in his new winery he plans to open around May 2012 in Benld. from the Build Macoupin County program.

"This (grant) replaced the old furnace and central air. Our plan is to be open by Italian-

American Days. We are very excited about it and hope the people of Benld will be also," said Snider. "We hope to capitalized on the Old Route 66 heritage and have salvaged some old architectural pieces."

"MEDP is glad we could assist a new start-up business in Benld. This winery is a great chance to bring in people from outside our county. This wouldn't have been possible had the City of Benld not seen the value in MEDP. We appreciate their support to economic growth in Macoupin County," said Executive Director Shari Albrecht

Bill's IGA was awarded \$5,000 for their lighting replacement

"We replaced 105 fixtures and the amount of light has just increased tremendously," said

Bill's IGA Owner Bill Miller.

"This program has been a great opportunity for Staunton businesses. I am glad to see Bill's IGA able to take advantage of this chance to improve their lighting and cut energy costs," said Craig Neuhaus, Mayor of Staunton.

MEDP has identified energy costs as a major factor in business retention in Macoupin County. Grantees were eligible to receive up to 100% of the remaining project costs once all qualifications and guidelines had been met and approved. The Macoupin County program works in conjunction with Ameren Illinois' Act on Energy program.

The winery will be located in the old packing building on 5th and Central. Other qualifying projects included light-

ing replacement, refrigeration upgrades and replacement of building window and doors.

Bill's IGA is a family-owned grocery store in Staunton offering a full service cold deli, meat department and carryout services. The store celebrated 30 years in business this year and has held an IGA Five Star Store rating for the last decade. They operate Monday – Saturday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., 618-635-2121. Bill's IGA honors double coupons everyday on all manufacturer's coupons up to and including 50 cents. Visit their website at www.billsstaunton.iga.com or on Facebook at Bill's IGA.

Businesses had to be located in MEDP member communities as of October 15, 2010 or unincorporated Macoupin County.



**MEDP'S
NewsFlash**

For more information about
Macoupin Economic Development Partnership
or newsletter submissions
contact:
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courtney@macoupinpartners.com