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Bizbriefs

New from the South Suburbs

Sunday, May 23, 2004

LANSING

Tourism industry Web site

The 300,000 tourism industry employees and other Illinois residents can e-mail state officials and Gov. Rod Blagojevich through a Web site established to keep track of a campaign to overcome proposed tourism budget cuts.

The state budget proposed for fiscal year 2005 calls for a 54 percent cut in the Illinois tourism budget.

Visit Illinois, the state tourism federation that includes the Chicago Southland Convention & Visitors Bureau in Lansing, established the site, www.visitorsmeanjobs.com.

One of every eight people in Illinois works in the tourism industry, which generates \$1.1 billion in state tax revenue. Tourism industry officials said the proposed budget cut could cost 30,000 people their jobs.

MATTESON

Members sought

The Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce's annual membership drive continues through June 2, with more than 75 members participating in the recruitment program.

The recruiters meet at 7:30 a.m. each Wednesday during the drive at the Holiday Inn Matteson Hotel and Conference Center. Participants have been divided into teams and are competing for individual and team prizes.

Terri Dousias-Winfrey leads the recruiting drive as chamber vice chairman of membership development.

David Blake of Just for Fun Entertainment and Events and Ouida Prater of Paragon Payment Systems Inc. are serving as co-chairs of the drive.

MIDLOTHIAN

Credit unions merge

South Division Credit Union recently welcomed members of the Lady of Loretto Credit Union in Hometown into its membership.

Lady of Loretto members approved the merger with the SDCU, which is headquartered in Evergreen Park and has branch offices in Midlothian and Chicago.

SDCU officials said the merged credit union would continue to offer financial services at the church on Sundays from 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

MOKENA

Custom frame shop open

Duane Siebenmann has opened an outlet of The Great Frame Up in the Mokena Corners shopping center.

The custom framing shop opened for business recently at 11232 W. Lincoln Highway.

Offering a wide selection of custom framing services, the shop is open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

More information is at (815) 806-8255 and on the Net at www.mokena.thegreatframeup.com.

OLYMPIA FIELDS

Malaysian staff trained

Four consultants from Francorp. Inc.'s new Kuala Lumpur office in Malaysia have returned to their headquarters after a training visit to the firm's Olympia Fields headquarters.

"They are an outstanding group of professionals who will play a key role in bringing franchise opportunities to entrepreneurs throughout Asia," said Donald D. Boroian, Francorp's founder, chairman and chief executive officer.

The four received in-depth training in Olympia Fields, New York City and Washington, D.C., before returning to Kuala Lumpur on May 3.

The four are Affandy Abd-Raof Faiz, Malaysian president and chief executive officer; Kamarulashikin Kamsah, vice president; Azam Hairy Hasan and Dahlia Nazmi, senior consultants.

Francorp is a franchise consulting and development firm with offices in New York, Los Angeles and Naples, Fla.; Buenos Aires, Kuala Lumpur, La

Plata, Manila, Mexico City, Montevideo, Santiago and Sevilla.

SOUTH HOLLAND

Insurance agency honored

Lagestee Insurance Agency in South Holland has been honored for outstanding performance in the West Bend Mutual Insurance Co.'s Partners in Excellence program.

Less than one-quarter of the more than 400 independent agencies participating in the program were honored.

The program measures six areas of agency performance, including profitability, premium volume and underwriting.

Lagestee Insurance Agency has been serving the South Suburbs for 31 years.

TINLEY PARK

Petland store opened

Shorewood residents Marion and Mike Oddo recently opened a Petland store in the Tinley Park Plaza near the intersection of 159th Street and Harlem Avenue.

"I was always interested in starting a franchise business and having the opportunity to work with my wife," Mike Oddo said.

"Our love of animals brought us to Petland along with our desire to own our own business under the guidance of a franchise," Marion Oddo said.

The couple will operate the 6,580-square-foot shop with the help of their daughter, Stephanie Meister, who has a degree in animal science from the University of Illinois.

The Oddos are developing an Adopt-A-Pet program to help place shelter animals and unwanted litters of puppies and kittens in the community.

SOUTH SUBURBS

Teen driver program

COUNTRY Insurance & Financial Services has developed a program to educate teenagers on the components of auto insurance, factors that affect rates and what young drivers can do to reduce their insurance costs.

The company said its "What Will Auto Insurance Cost You?" program can be scheduled through local COUNTRY agents.

Studies have shown that drivers age 19 or younger have twice as many accidents as older drivers. The average cost of the accidents is almost \$1,500 more than the average cost of an accident involving an adult driver.

NATION

HH bonds discontinued

The U.S. Treasury Department is reminding Americans that it will stop issuing Series HH savings bonds this summer, as part a move to a paperless, electronic account system for all the department's retail securities.

At the close of business on Aug. 31, owners of Series EE and E bonds will no longer be able to exchange them for HH bonds and owners of matured HH/H bonds will no longer be able to reinvest their holdings in HH bonds.

Investors holding the HH bonds, however, will continue to earn interest until their bonds reach final maturity 20 years after issue.

More information about the change is available at the U.S. Treasury's Web site, www.treasurydirect.gov.

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