



# On the Farm....

Issue Eight, March 2020



Welcome to Issue #8 of On the Farm! Its been a while since our last newsletter and I apologize for that. 2019 proved to be a very busy and eventful year here at Prairie State Bank & Trust and in this issue of On the Farm you'll find out why that was the case. In keeping with the theme at our annual All Employee Day back in January, we are indeed a "Bank on the Move!!" As the 2020 planting season approaches we remind you to be safe out there and hope you enjoy the newsletter.

*-Mike Battefeld, Western Region President*

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## Positioning ourselves for the future

# NEWS

Evolution is inevitable with any business and management's actions (or lack thereof) often dictate how successful the business will or will not be as the landscape changes.

All of us can likely think of an example or two of major corporations that have failed to adapt and thus fallen victim to declining revenue, loss of market share as the world passed them by or catastrophic business interruptions rooted in the lack of a succession plan. We want you to know that we are here for the long haul and have recently taken steps to make sure we can continue delivering quality products and services for years to come.

For a bank its more than

earnings or capital or asset quality. Making sure we have the right people in the right places is just as important.

In November 2019 we implemented a significant management transition that not only shifts various parts of our operational day to day responsibilities but also rewards a new set of skilled and energetic employees who have grown with our company over the last several years. We are excited with this change and are confident that it puts us where we need to be going forward.

Jacksonville Regional President John Rohn, while continuing at that post, now also serves as our Chief Growth Officer. As the title indicates, John and his team

will be focusing on all aspects of product development, communication and marketing as we continue to emphasize growing our market share throughout central Illinois.

Regional President Sam Leak takes on additional responsibilities as Chief Lending Officer. Sam's experience as an agricultural and commercial lender makes him an ideal fit for this position.

Veteran Chad Faller from our Eastern Region continues oversight in that part of our market footprint and is now also charged with driving our financial success as Chief Performance Officer.

These are but a few of the steps we have taken to fine tune our institution to make it the best it can be not only today but for decades to come. We are indeed **A BANK ON THE MOVE!!!**



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## COVID-19's farming impact

Today is March 19, 2020 and I write this segment of our newsletter from the friendly confines of my home office. I'm here as part of our prudent and proactive approach to doing our part in halting the impact of COVID-19 through social distancing. It just makes sense that we as a bank do what we can to make sure we maintain business continuity. My German Shepherd Duke loves it and he's given me some great input into this version of OTF.

I certainly hope that by the time this reaches you the virus will be just a memory and we will all have moved on with things. The reality is, however, that at

this point we are in the midst of an event like none we have seen before. No one really knows what the impact of this will be by the time it is finally over. Right now the media coverage is, as it should be, focused on the worldwide health impact. It goes without saying though that it will be a while before the economy, agriculture included, recovers from this.

Most of the farming related COVID-19 concern at this point seems centered in potential supply chain issues. As logistics are disrupted and efforts proceed to slow the spread of the virus, multiple connected industry sectors are already being effected. One could certainly foresee export issues taking a toll on markets, especially when less robust infrastructures abroad are factored in.

Agricultural demographics could be considered a two edge sword. On the positive side, farming obviously normally occurs in areas of lesser population density. On the flip side, the farming workforce tends to be significantly older than other industries. With age comes a degree of increased risk of complications from the virus. According to the 2017 Ag census, the average age of a principal farm operator is 58 and 26% of operators are 65+.

Only time will tell what the real effect of the current pandemic will be. About the best any of us can do at this point is to take reasonable precautions, keep informed, listen to the experts and above all be careful out there.

*"If we estimate dignity by immediate usefulness, agriculture is undoubtedly the first and noblest science.."*

*Samuel Johnson*



## Lender Focus- Justin Lyon, Decatur

Our Lender Focus for this edition features Justin Lyon from our Decatur-Pershing office.



Justin grew up in the small farming community of Niantic located just off I-72 west of Decatur. His upbringing is obviously rooted in rural

America and agriculture with various family members engaged in the industry.

Justin attended Niantic-Harristown schools and then graduated from Millikin University with a degree in Management and Organizational Leadership.

Justin's track record in banking goes back 9 years, with the last 6 at Prairie State Bank & Trust. Today he serves not only as a lender to our Decatur market customers, but as a crop insurance agent with our

subsidiary American Prairie Insurance Solutions.

Justin is the proud father of two sons, Jonah (8) and Owen (7).

Some refer to him simply as "coach" as he donates his time as such to the Decatur YMCA Junior NBA and Warrensburg-Latham youth baseball program. Hobbies include playing basketball and working out (which he says offsets his passion for pizza).

If you get the chance stop by the Pershing Road location and visit Mr. Lyon.....you'll be glad you did.

## Buda engine company....the history

OK I admit it, I am a “motorhead.” I like engines... specifications...performance... noise.... history. All of it.

Growing up in Meredosia I was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit the McKee (we always said “McGee”) Creek Drainage District pump house just over the river. As a youngster I was always amazed at the assortment of engines in that old pump house. There was a 3 cylinder Fairbanks upright, a

Life is journey as they say.....always new people to meet and places to go. A few years back I learned that one of my



wife’s friends grew up on a family farm near Sheffield, IL just 6 or so miles from a little place called Buda in

Bureau County. Hmm...let’s google that.

Turns out that little spot is indeed the birthplace of the Buda Engine Company.

The Buda Engine Company was founded in 1881 by George Chalender with a primary product line of smaller gasoline engines for railway use. In 1910 the company was moved to Harvey, IL, producing engines for trucks, industrial and marine applications. The product line evolved to diesels, utilizing a proprietary cylinder head called the “Lavona.” Allis-Chalmers acquired the company in 1953 and the Buda-Lavona diesel was re-christened the Allis-Chalmers diesel.

Buda was in the right place at the right time it seems as many of their engines were used in equipment that at the time was replacing horse drawn units. Early 1920’s Kenworth trucks



housed a Buda engine under the hood.

Oddly, some of the railroad motorcars originally produced by Buda ultimately became Fairbanks products. Buda’s primary competitors back in the day seem to be more recognizable with Hercules, Waukesha, Continental and Wisconsin to name a few.

Whitcomb locomotives used in WWII were powered by Buda engines as were a limited number of naval boats.

Little more than old timer memories and a few engines in the hands of collectors remains of the Buda engine today.



Detroit (that screamed louder than I can even describe), an electric and a Buda. I’d seen other Fairbanks engines around, the Detroit was in trucks and a tractor or two and the electric was, well, just boring to me. That old Buda was always a



mystery and until about 10 years ago I never thought much of it. All I knew is that it was related to Allis-Chalmers somehow.

*“Farming looks might easy when your plow is a pencil and you’re a thousand miles from the corn field.”*



*-Dwight Eisenhower*

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