

# The Business News

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Jerseyville, Illinois

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## THE BEAR FACTS

A Message from Larry Bear, Chairperson

How do we measure up?

A friend of mine was bragging to me the other afternoon, that he wore the same size trousers that he did in high school. "Yep, 34's, right Hun?" His wife, who has bought all of his clothes for years, replied, "Right Honey, 38's!" I enjoyed the exchange way too much, he said later.

It's easy to see when you've gained a little weight. You're clothes might fit more snugly, and you don't really like the prospect of stepping on the scales at the end of the hallway. Your wife may offer a hint or two, like a half a slice of butterless toast for breakfast or getting you a membership to the Wellness Center for your birthday, when you really wanted a new golf club.

Belt size is an easy measurement. Other things are more subjective, like how friendly your employees are, or the effectiveness of your advertising. We can try to measure and rate, but it's sometimes quite challenging to make sense of it all. Often the only test is what's left over after all the expenses are paid.

So how do we rate the JCBA on Economic Development activity? According to the IL Department of Employment, Jersey County has gained an average of 49 jobs every year this century. From 2000 to 2004, we added 245 jobs, mostly in the nonfarm sector!

Some of these jobs were new to the community, some we grew from within. We helped in many of the situations, though in others we may have only rooted from the sidelines. The key thing, though, is that someone is "watching the store." Congratulations to all of you who have worked so hard through the JCED, the Chamber, and now JCBA to continue improving our County for ourselves, our friends, and our kids. It will continue to be a team effort!

Jim Mager, who currently is the Director of Manufacturing for Beall Manufacturing, was the presenter during the "Improving Your Selling Skills" Workshop on Thursday, September 15th at Jersey Community Hospital. Mr. Mager was the past assistant director for the Center for Advanced Manufacturing at SIUE as well as the director of the Small Business Development Center on the SIUE campus. The follow-up program, "Challenging Your Marketing Skills," will be presented on Thursday, November 17th from 9:30 to 11:30 am at JCH. For more information on this workshop, please call the JCBA office at 639-JCBA.



## New Business Program Signed into Law

In an effort to assist small business in rural Illinois, legislation has now gone into effect that created an innovative rural business loan program called The Rural Micro-Business Loan Program. By tapping into this new program, small businesses will be able to make key improvements to their infrastructure, allowing them to modernize their operations and increase their competitiveness.

Under this program, the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity will partner with local lending institutions to issue loans to businesses of five or fewer people that produce, process or market agricultural, forest, cottage and craft products or who are involved with tourism. The state's participation will allow lenders to stretch limited resources and reduce exposure in loans made through this program permitting banks to approve loans they otherwise could not. Loans are to be used to help create or retain jobs, modernize equipment or facilities or maintain competitiveness.