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Mitchell Esslinger relocates his campaign headquarters to Arthur

By Ariana R. Cherry

“Government and politics touch every corner of our lives. Healthy government is critical to our wellbeing and happiness as citizens of this great country. When the government is functioning properly we notice it helping in our daily lives,” quoted Mitchell Esslinger, who is running for Illinois House of Representatives.

Esslinger was born in Champaign and raised in Strasburg where he attended Stewardson-Strasburg High School. Esslinger then attended Lake Land Community College and the University of Illinois. Growing up, he has done a variety of jobs which has shaped him into the person he is today and it has had a hand in developing the views and opinions of the economy and government. According to his bio found on his website (<https://www.mitchellesslinger.com>), at the University of Illinois, he worked with local law enforcement to protect student safety. As a renovator, Mitchell started at the early age of 12 working for his family’s rental properties. As a tutor, he saw the importance of giving our schools what they need to help our children succeed. He keeps busy with his family’s centennial farm and helping care for a family friend’s autistic son. In doing so, he has seen how families struggle to get the care they need and decided to change that for hard-working people

in our district. But not only did his past job and volunteering experiences help him decide to become active in government, a tragic story involving his father’s struggles for health-care and quality of life, also aided in his decision to run.

“Back in 2012, my father, who proudly served this country during the Vietnam War, had a massive heart attack. He had to be airlifted to Carle after Sarah Bush could not treat him, and had to be resuscitated at least once in transit. He spent weeks in the hospital recovering from the damage to his body, and unfortunately, the VA covered very little of his medical costs. Two years later, in April 2014, my father, feeling failed by our institutions and suffering from crippling medical debt coupled with major depression from open heart surgery, took his own life in front of my brother. Since that moment, my family has never been the same. My father had felt unheard, unseen, and unrepresented. He had been failed by our systems that he was told would protect him. He felt as if he had just been cast aside and forgotten,” recalled Esslinger. “Going through this incredibly painful time showed me the human cost of our flawed institutions, and I have wanted to fight to fix them ever since,” he added.

In his interview, Esslinger said that he has had an interest in politics ever since he



was a young child. As he remembered his childhood and school days, he had a bit of a small story to tell.

“I remember arguing with my 3rd grade teacher that the Supreme Court should not be involved in deciding the outcomes of elections. In 5th grade, I used to draw political cartoons in my spare time. In 7th grade, I went over to the UK through a program started by President Eisenhower called People to People, which is designed to strengthen our bonds with our allied countries. In high school I was attending Rotary programs designed to help further students in business and government. Once I got into college, I finally got my chance to work on

presidential campaigns,” Esslinger told. He continued. “Earlier in my life, growing up around everyone getting angry at politicians, I actually always felt ashamed for being so interested in politics and government. However, I would always wonder, why is it that these government officials cannot do the one thing they are paid to do and work for the people of Illinois?”

Being that healthcare has been an important and even personal issue with Esslinger, he also spoke about today’s pandemic and his take on how the government has handled the situation. “I disagree with the way our government has dealt with this pandemic. I believe that there is much more to be done for our es-

sential workers, individuals, and families with pre-existing conditions. I believe it is crucial that Illinois covers medical treatment related to COVID-19 for essential workers and those who have lost their jobs until at least April 2021. We also need to make sure people can stay in their homes right now, and I support a rent and foreclosure moratorium, and no water or electricity shut-offs until April of 2021,” he stated.

“We have all seen the photos of the shanty towns during the Great Depression - that is not a reality I want for my district. We also need to cap prescription drug costs so that families who are already struggling don’t have to ration their medication or go

without entirely,” he added. One last issue that Esslinger felt important to add was one that his opponent, Brad Halbrook is trying to pass: the bill stating that Illinois will separate from Chicago and Chicago will become the 51st state.

“On its face, this bill is ludicrous even from a Republican perspective. Firstly, it’s unconstitutional, and I was under the impression that conservative values emphasize the importance of liberty and the Constitution,” he said. “I encourage anyone interested in this issue to read the SIU Paul Simon Public Policy Institute report on Public Budgeting, as it clearly outlines that for every tax dollar Cook County sends to Springfield, it gets about \$0.90 back. For every dollar our counties in Central Illinois send to Springfield, we get back roughly \$1.87 on average! If we entertain this idea of cutting Chicago out of the state, this means we would see our taxes likely doubled,” Esslinger explained. As of recent, Esslinger has moved his campaign headquarters to right here in Arthur at his family’s inn. “We encourage anyone to reach out to our campaign on our website if they want yard signs, if they want to donate, or if they want to volunteer to join our fight at www.mitchellesslinger.com/volunteer.” he informed.

Eastern Illinois Foodbank announces resignation of president and CEO

Eastern Illinois Foodbank today announced that Jim Hires, President and CEO, has decided to retire after fifteen years of service with the organization. He will continue as President and CEO of Eastern Illinois Foodbank until the position is filled or his planned final day of April 2, 2021, allowing the

Foodbank time for a successful transition. Hires has served in his current role since May 2005. During his tenure as President and CEO, Hires achieved the following accomplishments:

- * Increased the Foodbank’s reach from 14 counties to 18
- * Grew food distri-

bution from 2.2 million pounds per year to nearly 11.5 million

- * Increased the number of individuals served per month from 48,800 to 55,000
- * Acquired the oversight of the Peoria Area Food Bank as a partner distribution organization for Feeding America

* Increased the number of Foodbank employees from ten to more than thirty

“Being able to lead the work of the Foodbank these past years is the most important, fulfilling and humbling thing I have done in my entire work life. I have felt honored and grateful every day to

address alleviating hunger with an amazing and talented staff, who made this an extraordinary place to work each day,” Hires said. “I have always been buoyed by the support and encouragement of our community, donors and our Boards of Directors. I was able to say daily that someone got to eat today

because of what we did.”

“We are pleased to congratulate Jim on reaching this milestone of retirement, and more specifically to congratulate him on the numerous long-term contributions he has made while at Eastern Illinois Foodbank,” said EIF Board Chair Marc Bralts.

See CEO page 6

Douglas County Farm Bureau President agriculture update for September

By Larry W. Dallas Douglas County Farm Bureau President

Douglas County harvest started in mid-September. ADM Tuscola offered half-price drying for corn and that got some guys out into the field to see what they had. We were pleased to find early planted corn with moisture in the high teens and picked several acres. There were some soybeans cut as well. We have heard good yields so far. Each year we anticipate starting to harvest, but it surprised me a little this year since we planted relatively late.

If a grain elevator charges two and a half cents per point of moisture per bushel to dry corn, delivering 25 percent moisture corn means a charge of 25 cents per bushel as the elevator dries the corn to a safe moisture of 15 percent. Saving half of that charge on corn yielding 200 bushels per acre means a savings of \$25 an acre. A farmer can leave the corn in the field hoping the corn will lose that moisture naturally

but that exposes the crop to the weather as that drying occurs. Like most of the decisions we make, there are benefits and risks.

Many grain elevators will start harvest season with reduced price drying for corn. The elevator might have lower quality grain from the year before they need good corn to blend with. They might have a train to load but have not taken in enough grain to fill it. I think sometimes they do it just to stir farmers up and get them going into harvest.

Commodity prices have improved in the last month. We have been given a variety of reasons for this. Many of the U.S major growing areas finished the growing season off-dry, certainly hurting the final yield. Other areas of the world have also been dry. China’s main crop areas have been the opposite with flooding rain for most of this growing season. All this uncertainty about final yields has put a little bump in the markets.

China has continued

to purchase large quantities of our corn, soybeans, and wheat. Theoretically, the trade deal worked out early this year obligates China to buy \$51 billion of farm commodities but few people expected them to reach that. They have made a dent in the amount. South America is out of soybeans and will not have their next harvest until our spring timeframe. China has to come to us for beans.

The German pork industry is in disarray with an African Swine Fever outbreak on its border with Poland. Forty percent of German pork is exported but several Asian countries have cut off imports from Germany in fear of the disease. The same disease that devastated China’s pork industry, ASF is highly contagious to hogs and difficult to control. The German outbreak is in wild hogs so far, making it even harder to get a handle on. I read recently that Denmark has a fence on its border with Germany to keep wild hogs out. Denmark too has a large pork industry.

There are wild hogs in the U.S. and there have been some in Illinois. Sometimes these are purposely released and other times the animals have been present for years. Southern states particularly have large wild hog populations, to the point that there is no season on them. They may be shot at any time in an attempt to control the numbers. As seen in Germany these are a potential reservoir of disease that our animal agriculture does not need.

The U.S. livestock industry is still recovering from the coronavirus shutdowns. Slaughter numbers are back close to pre-pandemic numbers. Local locker plants are still far in the future scheduling animal processing. We have a friend that will sell us a pig to butcher, but we have not found a locker to take it to.

As harvest begins, we have other decisions to make for the coming year. What mix of corn and soybeans to plant in 2021 and what fertilizer to apply to those acres is one big decision. A farmer

that wants to plant wheat has only a week or so to plan that out. Wheat planting is scheduled based on the life cycle of the Hessian fly, a severe pest of wheat. The fly-free date is calculated, usually in the first week of October in this area. Wheat planted after that date is less likely to suffer Hessian fly infestation.

Fertilizer for the upcoming crop is a major decision because of the expense that involves. For several years we have spread our fertilizer with variable-rate technology. I know I have talked about this before. Using global positioning and soil tests taken on a grid pattern of 2.5-acre plots, a mix of fertilizer is spread specific to that 2.5 acres. Until GPS a whole field was generally spread with the same amount of fertilizer. That meant some areas got more than needed and others less than required for the next crop.

Our combine has a yield monitor with GPS mapping. We have used those maps to figure out what areas need tiling. Sometimes variety

differences will show up as well. Matching the yield map to a soil test map or soil type map can show an area of low nutrients or maybe that a certain variety of corn or soybeans is not compatible with that soil. A yield monitor is a useful tool for management. In addition to yield, we can get both on the go and average moisture for the grain coming into the combine. We have had moisture testers for 50 years but nothing this convenient. This year the combined moisture has matched the elevator reasonably well.

As we begin to harvest, we are going to be on the roads moving between fields. Combines are slow and big. We might not be able to get out of your way as fast as you would like, possibly because of an obstacle you cannot see from where you are. Please be patient and cautious when you see farm equipment on the road. Thank you for reading about agriculture this month.



Wild Rose Boutique



Mattoon Flower Shop

Think
local,
Shop
local!
Downtown Mattoon



Shore's Jewelry



Saphire Salon & Spa