



# Illinois Business Journal

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## NorthPoint sets rapid pace along interstate corridor

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

Rapidly expanding Gateway TradePort in Pontoon Beach is becoming the center of Madison County's logistical expansion, with much more planned in coming years.

NorthPoint Development's fourth building in the industrial park is now under construction. The first building began two years ago, and the finished properties have been filling up quickly.

The master plan would allow for up to

seven more buildings, all in the area south of Interstate 270 and lying between Illinois Routes 111 and 255. Gateway TradePort offers the potential of 7.5 million square feet of buildings across 600 acres.

"What we do is very important not just locally but nationally for the part it plays in the supply chain," said Wakeel Rahman, vice president of acquisitions for NorthPoint, a private real estate development firm formed in 2012 and specializing in Class A industrial facilities.

In 2020 NorthPoint was ranked by Real Capital Analytics as the No. 1 industrial developer in the United States over the past five years. NorthPoint has projects from coast to coast. It has grown from just eight employees to more than 350 since its formation.

To understand the local development, one must recognize what NorthPoint does nationally, he said. The company is based in Kansas City, Mo.,

with major offices in St. Louis, Cincinnati, and six other key markets.

"Our current portfolio developed is just under 110 million square feet. That's spread out among 23 different markets," Rahman said. "We have just under 30 million square feet of industrial space under construction somewhere in the country. That represents about nearly a billion dollars of investment."

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## Vodka ... with a twist of kindness

### Two friends' new business aims to help nonprofits

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

Denise Arendell and Christa Guilbeault were having dinner in March of last year when the friends' conversation turned to business and charity.

What kind of operation, they wondered, would do well coming out of a pandemic? A business that would also serve the kinds of causes they've come to love?

Somewhat surreally, they settled on making vodka.

"We thought it would be fun," Arendell, of Edwardsville, said. "Women love vodka. Women love to support a cause."

The fact that neither of them had ever been involved in such a business was not a deterrent. They woke up the next day and got busy.

Sixteen months later, their distilling distinction is getting noticed. Social Grace

Vodka is popping up throughout Metro East. And it's garnering conversation.

"It's been a fun experience. We get positive feedback from everyone we talk to. Talking about vodka is a lot more interesting than talking about the weather," Guilbeault, of Glen Carbon, said.

Central to the brand is the charitable reasoning behind Social Grace. The two women are active in several not-for-profit endeavors in the region. They have watched as the pandemic chipped away at fund-raising.

"Passion for giving back fueled this," Arendell said. "March of 2020 changed things. Everything was shutting down — charitable golf outings, big galas. We knew how much suffering it would cause to all the nonprofits missing out on events."

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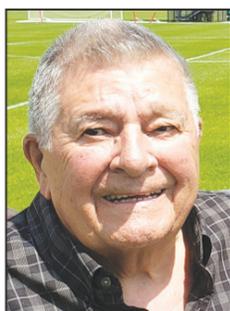


Denise Arendell, left, and Christa Guilbeault holding bottles of their Social Grace Vodka.

## Thirty years ago, a gambling boat created history in Southern Illinois

A Q&A with former Illinois Sen. Denny Jacobs

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Thirty years ago, September 1991, Illinois' first riverboat gambling facility, the Alton Belle Casino, opened in Alton, thus launching a statewide gaming industry that evolved into storefront and social club video terminals, online gaming and sports betting. Taken together, the enterprises have



Jacobs

forever changed the tax structure that the state and host communities now depend upon. The IBJ caught up with the original sponsor of the legislation, retired former state Sen. Denny Jacobs, 83, a Democrat from

East Moline, for a lookback on the significance of the birth and growth of legal gambling in Illinois.

IBJ: It's been 30 years since all this transpired. That's pretty amazing when you think about it.

Jacobs: That's for sure. I didn't think I'd be alive for that long.

IBJ: How did you get behind the original legislation on this?

Jacobs: It was a simple thing for me. Iowa had passed riverboat gam-

ing and we went over there for their inauguration and saw all the excitement it brought. I said, 'Hell, we can't give that to Iowa.' I thought we had to do this in order to be in a competitive situation. That's basically the reason.

IBJ: Obviously you were thinking about a revenue stream that would help your community and other communities in the state. What was your thinking there?

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