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Stored natural gas aids Ameren demand

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

On a bitter day in January, a bundled-up Steve Underwood walked through the Ameren Illinois natural gas storage field in Freeburg, looking over a sea of pipes, valves, compressors and towers, and listening to the mechanical din.

It was a somewhat comforting noise. “Days like today, when it’s super, super cold, this really helps meet that demand to keep everyone warm,” he said.

The people of Southern Illinois can be thankful for a guy like Underwood. He and his crews are helping keep furnace flames firing.

Underwood, the director of gas storage for Ameren Illinois, has a lot to do with getting natural gas where and when it’s needed. And on this day, it was needed.

This particular storage yard, in south-central St. Clair County, stands atop 1.9 billion cubic feet of gas along Illinois Route 15. The facility is one of 12 storage fields throughout Ameren Illinois’ territory, the northernmost of which is close to Galesburg. The 12 fields collectively store 24.7 billion cubic feet of gas.

The other storage fields are in Lincoln, Glasford, Sciota, Hillsboro, Johnston City, Tilden, Eden, Centralia, Hookdale and Ashmore.

Gas is injected into wells that range from 297 to 415 deep and stored in underground, natural geologic formations. Gas is injected during the summer and extracted during the winter when it’s needed. Such storage ensures there is gas to meet demand.

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Steve Underwood, the director of gas storage for Ameren Illinois, at the Freeburg storage field. Enough gas is withdrawn there each winter to fill up Busch Stadium 83 times.

Renewed efforts underway to market land around Hofbräuhaus

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

A new brokerage deal is giving life to efforts to market property surrounding the Hofbräuhaus St. Louis restaurant in Belleville.

The restaurant itself, which is reopened again with new management after a short period of closure, is not part of the available property, but it does serve as a draw, said broker Mike Durbin, of BARBERMURPHY, which signed on to help sell or lease the 26.25 acres along Illinois Route 15. The company is the largest commercial real estate firm in Southern Illinois.

The property is immediately behind and around Hofbräuhaus to the north and east. The Munich-style restaurant opened to much fanfare in the spring of 2018, at which time the Keller family, which owns

the restaurant, projected a long-range plan for hotels, restaurants and a convention center on the surrounding land.

The land is owned by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a Catholic religious order that owns the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows directly across Illinois Route 15 from the site. The shrine has some 1 million visitors annually.

BARBERMURPHY’s contract to move the property is with Oblate Shrines & Renewal Center Inc.

No price is formally listed on the property. The site includes some 1,088 square feet of frontage along Route 15 and is in a tax increment financing district and an enterprise zone.

The available land is essentially to the north and the east of the restaurant.

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Brokers attempt to move Caseyville commercial land

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

Long-stalled progress on Forest Lakes, the commercial property adjacent to the Tanglewood residential development in Caseyville, is getting another look.

The 34-acre site is now being represented by the brokerage firm of BARBERMURPHY. The site is along Illinois Route 159 just south of Collinsville.

Tanglewood is the residential

home development nestled in back of the acreage, accessible by Tanglewood Parkway, the only access from 159. Drivers must pass through the land dedicated to Forest Lakes to get to Tanglewood.

Presently, the only current commercial occupant is A to Z Pediatrics.

Some 1,400-plus feet of the acreage fronts 159, said broker Mike Durbin.

“We envision more medical facilities to come in to that area, so I’ve been reaching out to some of the known

developers for medical groups. I haven’t gotten the response I’ve wanted but I’m still checking their temperature,” he said

Senior living facilities would also be a good use at the site, he said.

The land is zoned both B-2 and Planned Unit Development, meaning there are many options available.

A decent size hill leads into the development. The first road inside the property is a cul-de-sac that

leads to the pediatrics office.

Large tracts within the acres are on flat group that has good potential, Durbin said.

The property is owned by Peoples National Bank.

It is in an enterprise zone. A tax increment financing area has expired and would have to be reactivated to be utilized.

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