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A GANNETT COMPANY

NiSource exec retiring

Director who offered racing trip will resign from board of directors.

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BUSINESS

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People & Products

Ind. Guard, Reserve nominate employers

Four employers in Greater Lafayette and the surrounding area are in the running for the 2011 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

Indiana Guard and Reserve members nominated 95 employers for the award that recognizes employers for showing exceptional support to their employees who serve in the military. Indiana nominees include Subaru of Indiana Automotive Inc. and the Caterpillar Large Engine Center, both in Lafayette, the Carroll County Sheriff's Office in Delphi and Republic Services in Demotte.

Achievements

• John Edwards, an athletic trainer and physical therapist at Lafayette Rehabilitation



Edwards

Services, a Unity Healthcare partner in Lafayette, recently traveled with a USA Wrestling team to Slovenia and Bulgaria.

The team competed in two wrestling tournaments. Edwards also served as a volunteer athletic trainer for USA Wrestling at a tournament in Ukraine in 2009 and in Greece in 2008.

• Patricia Howey, owner of Special Education Consulting in West Point, and Catherine Michael of Hollingsworth and Zivitz in Carmel recently trained more than 50 special education lay advocates at the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates in San Antonio.

Participants in the two-day training actively tracked a case all the way to a due process hearing. COPAA has more than 1,200 members.

• Verizon Wireless collected more than 15,000 no-longer-used wireless phones in Indiana last year through its Hopeline program.

The phones were donated to victims of domestic violence at six Indiana-based nonprofit recipients, including the YWCA of Greater Lafayette.

Verizon Wireless also provided nearly \$30,000 in cash grants and 2 million minutes of airtime to domestic violence agencies in the state.

Short takes

Purdue Extension is offering a "Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing" from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. April 7 and May 12 at Purdue Extension Pulaski County, 125 S. Riverside, Winamac. The two-day workshop is geared toward those who work for nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Registration fee is \$150 per person, which includes materials and lunch both days.

To register or receive more information, visit the website www.pcrd.purdue.edu or call (888) 750-7277.

— Staff and wire reports

To submit items for People & Products, send them to Max Showalter by email at mshowalter@jconline.com; by mail to 217 N. Sixth St., Lafayette, IN 47901; or by fax to (765) 420-5246.

Caterpillar raises specter of moving from Ill.

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — The chief executive of Caterpillar wrote a letter to Illinois Gov. Patrick Quinn raising the possibility the heavy equipment company could move out of the state because of concerns that the direction the state is heading isn't favorable to business.

In a letter obtained Friday by The Pantagraph of Bloomington, Ill., Doug Oberhelman said officials in at least four states have ap-

proached Peoria-based Caterpillar about relocating since Illinois raised its income tax in January.

"I want to stay here. But as the leader of this business, I have to do what's right for Caterpillar when making decisions about where to invest," Oberhelman wrote. "The direction that this state is headed in is not favorable to business, and I'd like to work with you to change that."

Oberhelman wrote he has been called, cornered in meetings and wine and dined. He said he had

never considered living anywhere else or the possibility of Caterpillar relocating. "But I have to admit, the policymakers in Springfield seem to make it harder by the day," he wrote.

Quinn spokeswoman Brie Callahan said Friday the governor plans to discuss the letter with Oberhelman on April 5 when the two meet at a conference in Peoria.

"The governor welcomes frank and open exchanges between the business community and government, and we are always open to

new ideas that can help our businesses grow, innovate and create jobs," Callahan told the Pantagraph.

Along with the letter to Quinn, Oberhelman sent correspondence the company has received from leaders of South Dakota and Nebraska. Caterpillar spokesman Jim Dugan told The Pantagraph the letter shows Quinn that Oberhelman wants to be involved in finding solutions that benefit the company, which employs 23,000 people in Illinois.



By John Terhune/Journal & Courier

Len Fulkerson (left) reviews work orders with Richard Packard (center) and Art Green before dispatching the two men to clients Thursday in West Lafayette. Fulkerson is the owner of the Greater Lafayette franchise of Window Genie. Fulkerson started the business last year. Window Genie specializes in residential and commercial window cleaning as well as window tinting, pressure washing and concrete cleaning.

Ex-animal doc finds window of opportunity

By MAX SHOWALTER
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For the past year, Len Fulkerson has owned the Window Genie franchise that serves Lafayette and the surrounding area.

Before that, he was a veterinarian in Wolcott, whose life plan changed when the company he worked for was bought out by a larger firm.

"I was a veterinarian for 29 years before I started this franchise. I thought it was a good exit strategy," Fulkerson said. "We had a large pharma distribution clinic along with the veterinary and covered 12 states with 19 employees. I worked for the company that bought us for three years but didn't like the corporate life."

After exploring more than a half dozen franchise opportunities, Fulkerson settled on Window Genie, which he operates out of his home near West Lafayette.

Fulkerson has two employees — Richard Packard and Art Green.

"I felt like Window Genie fit my personality and what I want to do," he said. "It's a real simple franchise and doesn't take a lot of equipment or a big storefront."

Occupation: Franchise owner
Business name: Window Genie of Greater Lafayette

What you do: "We do window cleaning, pressure washing and window tinting," Fulkerson said. "We also do concrete cleaning."

What you used to do: I was a veterinary service consultant and ran a pharmaceutical distribution company," he said.

A typical day: "After getting my employees out and going on service calls for the day, I travel around and give estimates to customers," Fulkerson said. "Then I come back and get work orders ready for the next day."

What's new: "The thing we're most excited about is window tinting. There are new technology window films that save energy," Fulkerson said. "It's green technology, and there's a tremendous savings in energy."

Latest accomplishment: "We did some window tinting at Witham Hospital in Lebanon," Fulkerson said. "That's probably the most recent, exciting thing we did."

Biggest sacrifice you've made for the business: "Giving up the relationships I had with former employees and clients from my veterinary business," Fulkerson said. "Having to give those up to move on is probably the biggest sacrifice I made."

What you've learned: "People still appreciate good customer ser-

vice," he said. "I think that's an art that's been lost ... it doesn't matter what industry you're in."

Best business advice received: "You're only as good as the people around you," Fulkerson said. "Art and Rich are doing a great job. That's what makes us successful. You always want to hire quality people."

Best advice you can offer: Treat customers like you would want to be treated — the Golden Rule.

Moment you knew you'd made it: "I think when you're serving the public you need to have that edge of offering quality service," Fulkerson said. "I don't think there will come a point when I feel I've made it, as long as there are customers out there."

Others say: "He's got a great company. He does everything right — customer service and professionalism," said Janet Broyles, who had Window Genie do window tinting at her home. "We needed it done because UV rays were really coming into our house. It was a great solution for us."

Getting in touch: Window Genie, 5523 N. 75 West, West Lafayette, IN 47906. The website is www.windowgenie.com, and the phone number is (765) 464-3641.

Bacon lovers face rising prices

By DAN PILLER
Gannett

DES MOINES, Iowa — That summertime delight, the BLT sandwich with savory bacon and a fresh tomato, is likely to cost more this year.

The price of pork bellies, where bacon comes from, rose 30 cents a pound to \$1.23 on the Chicago futures market Friday. That price is about 50 percent higher than last year at this time.

Smithfield Foods vice president Robert Manly told a crowd of money managers Friday at the Barclay's Investment Conference in Orlando that "until last year, we'd never seen pork belly prices above \$1. Now we're well above that."

Bellies are riding the momentum of a red-hot livestock market, which in the last month has taken hog futures up about \$10 per hundredweight to almost \$104 for June delivery, mostly on export demand that has grown by as much as 33 percent this year.

Retail bacon prices have risen about 25 percent in the last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said, and the USDA said in a recent forecast that pork prices are likely to rise 6 percent to 7 percent more this year.

Cattle prices, meanwhile, have climbed to levels never before seen in the 47-year history of the futures contract.

Pork producers, who suffered three years of losses beginning in 2007, aren't in a hurry to put more pigs on the market.

The USDA said Friday in its quarterly hog inventory report that while the U.S. herd is holding steady at about 64 million head, producers expect to have 3 percent fewer sows giving birth later this year compared with 2010 and 5 percent fewer sows birthing than two years ago.

The biggest U.S. producer, Smithfield Foods, has cut its sow herd by 15 percent, Manly told the investors Friday.

"I'm trying to figure out what belly prices will be like when we get to tomato season," said Paul Bubeck, president of Lewright Meats in Iowa. "But we know bacon is going to be higher."

The reason for the rising prices is simple economics. Hog and cattle producers aren't increasing their herds.

CONTACT US

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WEEK AHEAD

Monday: Commerce Department releases personal income and spending for February, 8:30 a.m.

Tuesday: Conference Board releases the Consumer Confidence Index for March, 10 a.m.

Wednesday: Business Roundtable releases the first-quarter CEO economic outlook survey.

ON JCONLINE.COM

Get an insider's look at our local weather from Ben Cotton at jconline.com/weatherblog