

Annual Report 2019



CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL
OPPORTUNITIES

2019

Country

Community

Students

CHAIRMAN REPORT

Dear Investors, Mentors, Communities and Friends:

THANK YOU! First and foremost, we appreciate you being a stakeholder in our organization. Your contributions – past, present, and future – allow us to provide a unique and valuable opportunity for our local students. A special thank you to the school districts of Fisher, Gibson City–Melvin–Sibley, and Paxton–Buckley–Loda, for the cooperation of the respective administrations to successfully launch the program.

2019 – 2020 WHAT A YEAR!



The board was pleased to announce, in April 2019, that Shanna Hortin, had agreed to be the first facilitator of the program. It is the best decision the board has ever made. Shanna brings enthusiasm, firsthand experience as an entrepreneur, and what could be best described as a kid magnet aura to the program. Please know the program you helped create is in good hands.

The first class (still get excited typing that!) joined us in August 2019. Eight students were accepted into the program, and off they went. It was exciting as the board was able to view their success and failures during the year. The truly amazing part was watching them learn, and succeed from the failures they encountered, the true value of Prairieland CEO.

Oh, and that little life event that happened in March 2020, the COVID-19 shutdown. While it prematurely ended the student's ability to complete their individual business plans, they were able to hear from businesses that were dealing with the everchanging landscape, and the challenges it presented.

And off we go in into 2020-2021. The students have been accepted, class is starting, and lessons are ready to be learned. I would like to thank the board for their tireless efforts to create a safe environment amongst the COVID-19 concerns. This was completed with many hours of discussion by the board, all while they were dealing with the very same issues in their businesses and schools. We have a plan to continue class as close to normal as possible along with Plan B, Plan C...etc.

At a time when the skills gap of young people entering the workforce is growing wider, Prairieland CEO is committed to providing every opportunity to positively change how it impacts our communities and impacts our students. Thank you wholeheartedly for your participation in this effort. With your help and support, we look forward to so much more in 2020 -2021.

Warmest regards,

Eric Stalter
Chair, Board of Directors

FACILITATOR REPORT



The CEO experience is fundamentally about learning through doing, and networking with area business leaders who can help guide us on our journey. CEO meets every weekday from 7:00a.m. - 8:30a.m., and students are expected to arrive by 6:45a.m. or they are late. The first few weeks of CEO class are spent laying groundwork for the rest of the year and learning how to behave appropriately in a business setting. After that we are off and running! In a typical CEO week, two to three days of the week are spent in a conference room setting working on class projects or lessons or having guest speakers about business and professional development topics. The other two to three days of the week are spent visiting area businesses and learning from local business owners. During the year the class creates a micro-business, aka "Badge Business", executes a class business, and each student creates their own individual business culminating at the end of the year CEO tradeshow. In addition, CEO students participate in a mentor program and many other class activities and "extras" that help round-out their CEO experience. Along the journey CEO students are free to create and enjoy the experience of success, as

well as learn the life lessons of mistakes and poor decisions and accepting the consequences of failure. The hope is that by allowing these experiences in a safe learning environment with plenty of support, they will leave the CEO program better prepared personally and professionally to participate in the business world whether as business owners or valued employees.

CEO IN A COVID-19 YEAR

With quarantine in place and many unanswered questions about COVID-19, CEO moved along with schools to a completely online learning platform. As time progressed it became apparent to the board that the tradeshow would not be able to happen. Our students had college and military plans following graduation, so planning for individual businesses was suspended and business grants were ultimately not awarded. We finished our CEO year via video conference with guest speakers provided by the Midland Institute and from our very own communities. It wasn't the ideal end of our first CEO year, but it did provide some lessons, insights and experiences that will no doubt be of value to this 2019 CEO class in the future. A portion of the proceeds from class business projects will benefit local area food pantries and the 2020 CEO class, with the remainder being reinvested in the Prairieland CEO program.

Thanks to many hours of discussion and planning by our CEO board, the 2020 CEO class has kicked off with 8 new students and a strong commitment to in-person learning with proper COVID procedures and protocols in place. Our new class is excited and driven, and will no doubt rise to the challenges we place before them this year!



FRONT: Mackenzie Bruns, Anastasia Campe, Daneigh Burk, Emma Kurtenbaugh, Emily Adwell

BACK: Levi Zbinden, Nathan Daughenbaugh, Dylan Raub

TEAM BUILDING



LEMONADE STAND

Because the CEO program is new to our area, the class decided to do some community outreach to spread the word about the program. They set up a lemonade stand and sold lemonade and passed out information about the program. The group had a great time meeting new people and using their public speaking skills to explain what CEO is all about!



ESCAPE ROOM

The group spent a great evening at CU Adventures in Time and Space where they managed to escape the creepy cabin with 4 minutes to spare! Taking on evil spirits in a haunted cabin can really work up an appetite, so they followed up with a trip to Custard Cup!

PARADE OF LIGHTS

The group participated in the Parade of Lights in Gibson City to spread awareness of the program. The students decorated the truck with the theme "Candyland".



BUSINESSES

BADGE BUSINESS



Prairieland CEO students are introduced to the Badge Business on the second day of class. Badge Business is how we jump-start the shift from thinking like high school students, to thinking like entrepreneurs and real business-people! It also teaches students how to work as a class team and introduces basic key business concepts that they have most likely never thought of before. With Badge Business, students are told that they need professional looking name badges to wear for the year and it is up to them to obtain them. They are not allowed to use their own money, nor are they allowed to ask their parents, investors, or board members for money. They are also told that any excess money made on the Badge Business can be put toward their Class Business as "seed money". Outside of those parameters, the class is free to decide the design of the badge and how they will go about funding them. The 2019 class decided to sell advertising on the badges and added a CEO t-shirt with advertising with the idea that the t-shirts would help raise

community awareness of the new program. The eight students sold 25 advertising spots in one "super sales" day with a net profit of \$6,100.00.

CLASS BUSINESS – MURDER MYSTERY DINNER



The class business project allows CEO students use what they learned from Badge Business plus whatever they may or may not have made from Badge Business to execute a business project on a larger scale. Class business involves more moving parts, harder decisions, more complicated budgets, a longer time span, and more time spent working closely as a team. They are told that if they earn a profit on their class business that some of that profit will be available to them as grants to start their individual businesses. With seed money from their Badge Business, the 2019 class decided on a Murder Mystery

Dinner event with a raffle and silent auction as their class business. As a class they wrote a professional business plan for their idea and formally presented it to the CEO board for approval. Once approved, they planned event specifics, hired a professional acting company, contracted with a caterer, managed procuring items for the silent auction, and marketed their event. Unlike the Badge Business however, this time the road to success was a little bumpier. In late January our students were realizing the lessons of poor time management, the domino effect of poor decisions and procrastination, cash flow and budgeting issues, and the huge mistake in not utilizing all the "tools in our toolbox". This resulted in their event being rescheduled for a later date and it was ultimately saved by a single stroke of good luck. In the end, the event was very well attended, made the students a profit of \$3,500.00, and reinforced some very valuable life lessons. The look of confidence, pride and accomplishment on each student's face the night of the event was only magnified by the newfound understanding of overcoming struggle.

INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS

The planning and decision-making process for individual businesses started right in the middle of executing class business! Students learn some crucial lessons about stress and perspective during this transition. Using the resources and lessons learned from class business and badge business, each student conceptualized and wrote a business plan for a business that they wanted to start. They then presented those business plans for vetting and approval for a grant to a group of “sharks” at our very own Shark Tank Day. Thank you to Ross Sorensen of Landlocked Hops / Martensen, Neimann & Sorensen, Jack Murray of Murray Enterprises, Chad Hesterberg of IPG Insurance, Cody Kietzman of Frederick Bank, Eric Stalter of Fisher National Bank, and Brandon Chandler of Ingold’s Meat and Deli for serving as our panel of sharks. The students loved this experience and appreciated all the feedback given to help make their businesses successful. We recessed for Spring Break immediately following Shark Tank Day, with a list of individual goals to be met during break so that upon returning to CEO class we could apply for grants and get started with individual businesses. Unfortunately, during this break is when COVID-19 quarantine was implemented.

PRAIRIELAND CEO® ACTIVITIES & EXTRAS



- Team Building Escape Room – CU Adventures in Time and Space
- GC Harvest Festival Class Lemonade Stand
- Paxton Swine & Dine Class Lemonade Stand
- Students Formally Presented Class Business to CEO Board
- Gibson City Lighted Christmas Parade Float
- CEO Mentor Program – “Wisdom Wednesdays”
- Business Etiquette Training
- Attended “Mental Toughness” Talk by an Olympic Medalist
- Participated in CEO Investor Networking Social & Breakfast
- Fisher Area Business Association Student Guest Speakers
- Gibson City Lions Club Student Guest Speaker
- Fisher School Board Facilitator Guest Speaker
- Badge and T-Shirt Class Micro Business
- Class Business – Murder Mystery Dinner
- Shark Tank Day Individual Business Presentations

2020 PERSONAL BIOS

EMILY ADWELL



Emily is a senior at PBL High School and is one out of the eight members of her class to be representing Prairieland CEO in its first year. She plans to graduate high school and continue her academic career in college studying kinesiology and athletic training. She is a varsity basketball player for her school, as well as the student council president. Emily was first introduced to the program by her guidance counselor who suggested that it would be a great fit for her. She plans to use this program to expand her social connections and get a taste of what it's really like to create a business from the ground up and use it to gain trust with companies and most importantly, her customers. She believes that the future is bright for Prairieland CEO and is honored to be one of the first to represent such an inspiring program.

LEVI ZBINDEN



Levi Zbinden is a senior part time enrolled at Gibson City Melvin City High School and is homeschooled. Levi has grown up in rural Gibson City as the middle child with 3 brothers and 1 sister. Growing up on a beef farm Levi has always had a passion for working cattle. In his free time, Levi enjoys working with his show steers daily as well as hanging out with his family and friends. He has been active in the Loda Helping Hands 4-H club since a young age and throughout his high school years active in his local FFA chapter. Through the Prairieland CEO program Levi hopes to gain knowledge about being an entrepreneur and the ins and outs of running/owning a business. He is honored to be one of the eight students of CEO's first year.

ANASTASIA CAMPE



Anastasia is a senior at Fisher High school. She is one of the eight students that are representing the first class of 2019/2020 CEO program. Anastasia is the cheer captain of the Fisher high school cheer team. When she is not at school or cheer she spends most of her time editing video and managing media platforms. Her intentions of taking this class is to gain knowledge of the business world also to get herself recognized as a young responsible adult. After this year Anastasia plans on attending college to become a cinematography expert she expects the CEO program to help her succeed in the steps to becoming a professional editor.

DANEIGH BURK



Daneigh Burk is extremely excited to be one of the pioneers of the Prairieland CEO program! She has lived in the community of Fisher all 17 years of her life and is now attending her senior year at Fisher Jr/Sr High School. Besides the CEO program, she is also involved in the Bunnies girl's basketball team and leader of the student section. After graduating from Fisher, she plans to continue her education at Parkland College and hopes to join the Dental Hygiene program. Fisher seniors were called to a meeting one afternoon to discuss the new opportunity of the CEO program. Daneigh was quickly intrigued by the information given and expressed her interest right after the presentation. She has always loved the stories of people building their own way to success and hopes this program gives her the information and skills to do it for herself. She is ready for the CEO program to help

guide her and her other classmates through many important life skills and believes that it is the best opportunity she has ever taken!

EMMA KURTENBAUGH



Emma is a Senior attending GCMS High School. She lives in Gibson City with her parents, Nancy and Greg along with her younger sister, Ava. In her free time she enjoys taking her dog for walks, working out, and hanging out with her friends. Being very involved in her community, Emma is apart of numerous clubs and organizations. She participates in Student Council, Project Ignition, Interact, and is the student president of the Gibson City Food Pantry. After High School, Emma plans to continue her education in Business Administration and Entrepreneurial Studies. When she heard about this program she entered her application right away. She couldn't wait to be apart of a program that allows her to grow as an individual and a businesswoman. Being one of the first students to experience this program in her community, she is very appreciative of the opportunity she is being given before heading off into the real world.

DYLAN RAUB



Dylan Raub is a senior at PBL High School set to graduate in June of 2020. He is one of 8 students of Fisher, Paxton and Gibson and only 3 from Paxton who are representing the first year of Prairieland CEO. Dylan is already enlisted in the U.S. Navy where he plans to go to college during his service and start his own business afterwards with the money he saved and the skills learned from this program. In school, he is a member of the PBL marching band and PBL Robotics during the winter and does Bridge Team in the second semester of school. Dylan was introduced to the program in a class meeting held by the principal to inform students of program. He was interested because that is what he wanted to do with his life but he didn't know how to even start his dream of being an entrepreneur. He is excited to learn and prepare for entrepreneurship with the Prairieland CEO program and thinks it will be a great year.

2020 PERSONAL BIOS

MACKENZIE BRUNS



Mackenzie Bruns is a senior at Paxton-Buckley-Loda High School. While attending high school she has participated in student council, FFA, volleyball, soccer, track, and basketball. She grew up outside of Paxton with her parents and three siblings. Mackenzie hopes to continue her athletic career by playing basketball in college. While attending college she intends to major in marketing and entrepreneurship. Her long term goal is to one day own her own business and move to Arkansas or Tennessee. She joined the CEO program in hopes of learning more about the business world and better herself in basic business skills. She is excited and eager to see what the future holds.

NATHAN DAUGHENBAUGH



Nathan is a senior at GCMS High School and is one of the eight members of her class to be representing Prairieland CEO in its first year. He plans to graduate high school and continue his academic career in college studying either sports management or business. He has played varsity baseball for four years in high school and one year of varsity basketball. He plans to use CEO to help him in the business world if he decides to take that route and make connections with people that could help in his future. He is honored to be part of the first group of CEO students to go through the program in this area.



Class Officers (L-R) - Emma Kurtenbaugh/
Chief Operating Officer, Nathan Daughenbaugh/Chief
Financial Officer, Emily Adwell/Chief Executive Officer

GUEST SPEAKERS AND BUSINESS VISITS

Eric Stalter – Fisher National Bank

Chad Hesterberg – IPG Insurance

Nick Reutter – Farmers - Merchants Bank

Jeremy Darnall – Superintendent, GCMS Schools

Jon Kelly – Fisher High School Principal

Kelly Graves – Kelly Graves Design

Sara Bielfeldt – Expressions Salon & Boutique

Bob Dickey – Bob Dickey Sales / Retired Eastern Illini
Electric Cooperative

Holly Haberkorn – VSI Studios

Cheryl Hartke – Keynote Speaker, Private Teacher

Tracy Epps – Bank of Gibson City

Andy Hudson – Hudson Drug

Matt Barnard – Crop Copter

Joel Hastings – NexStep

Randy Wyant – Precision Tractor Parts

Betty Brennan – Taylor Studios

Dan Dickey – Mayor of Gibson City

Robin Niewold – Pro-Type Printing

Nick Reutter & Ross Sorensen – Landlocked Hops

Ross Sorensen – Martensen, Niemann & Sorensen

Jeremy Reale – Village of Fisher

Amy Tarr – Midland Institute

Chad Mines – CRC Construction

Laura Hieser – Remax Realty

Randy Huffman – Custom Crane

Dave Hieser – Praxsym

Brandon & Carissa Chandler – Ingold's Meat & Deli

Joe Wier – Hieser Insurance

Krista McCallister – Corner Store

Jenna Vogel – Doug's Pharmacy

Jeff Schaffer Tax & Accounting

Valerie & Bob Williamson – Chik-Fil-A Champaign

Chris & Jack Murray – Murray Enterprises

Elite Fitness

Christina Hudson – Hair Today

Syd & Sadie's Boutique



2019 PRAIRIELAND CEO TOPICS COVERED

- Selling and Sales Techniques Marketing / Branding
- Social Media Use in Marketing and Business
- Financial Concepts: Banking, Cash Flow, Budgeting, Income Statement, Balance Sheet, ROI, Break-Even
- SWOT Analysis
- Risk Management & Assessment
- Economic Concepts: Supply, Demand, Establishing Pricing
- Responsible and Smart Social Media Use
- Business Etiquette and Behavior / Dining Etiquette
- Business Introductions / Networking / Small Talk
- Awareness of Business News
- Professional Photography and Imagery in Business
- Personality Assessment / Personal Awareness / Awareness of Others
- Writing Business Plans
- Public Speaking and Presentations
- Time Management
- Importance of Appropriate Personal Presentation and Dress
- Working in Teams / Committees
- Customer Service
- Franchises
- Employee Management
- Types of Business Structures and Organizations
- Local Government in Business
- Journeys, Stories, Successes and Failures of Local Business People and Businesses in Our Communities

BIG THANKS TO OUR HOST CLASS SITE!



MOYER DISTRICT
Library

• Life Lessons – Book by Craig Lindvahl, Founder of the CEO Program

- "Take it All In"** – Look beyond the moment and the present circumstances. Learn from everyone, everything, and every situation.
- "Be Careful How You Magnify"** – Stay focused on the big picture of what matters and you'll be able to keep things in perspective.
- "Life Ain't No Laser Beam"** – Life doesn't happen in a straight line. Be a successful person and the rest will fall into place.
- "Riding the Rapids"** – Rough water coming? Accept that its going to be scary and paddle like heck.
- "Boomslam"** – Acknowledge that you will have challenges and bumps, and that sometimes things will go wrong and it will be YOUR fault.
- "The Toolbox of Life"** – Understand and recognize the tools you have in your toolbox. Keep your mind open for new ways to use them.
- "From Here to the Door"** – Understand risk. See beyond it. Think big thoughts.
- "The Buckeye"** – Dream. Aspire. Achieve. Don't fall into the trap that working toward a dream is for someone else.
- "Everything Has Value"** – Things aren't always immediately apparent. Don't dismiss things because you can't see the value right now.
- "The Three Most Important Things"** – Do what you say you're going to do... when you say you are going to...and communicate!
- "Nobody Cares About the Storm"** – Be the person who is getting things done, not the one who is giving excuses why they aren't.
- "Personal Capital"** – Do the right things, live and work the right way, and you build capital with people. It works in reverse too!
- "Ignorance vs. Stupidity"** – Ignorance and stupidity are two drastically different things. Know the difference. you do.
- "What Happens Next"** – Think about more than your side of a situation. Consider someone else's point of view.
- "Everyone Tells Their Own Story"** – We all tell our version of the story. What story will people tell about you?
- "Four People On A Street Corner"** – Recognizing the value in the differences of others is something successful people do every day.
- "Learning From Other People"** – When you come across someone who has something figured out, pay attention. Period.
- "Perserverance is Overrated"** – Know there will be failures and vow to learn from them. Don't focus on the individual failures.
- "Control Only What YOU Control"** – Control what you can control and release the rest.
- "In One Heartbeat"** – One moment can change EVERYTHING.
- "People Magnets"** – Live a life that is focused outward, on other people, on ideas, and on things that are positive.
- "The Theory of Multiplying"** – Overwhelmed? Too busy? Make a categorized list and cut it down to size. Keep it in perspective.
- "Repetition is Good"** – Embrace the value of repetition. Pay attention, watch for patterns, listen for commonalities, and do it again!
- "The Kitchen of Learning"** – Don't just sit at the table of life with your head down and consume whatever is put in front of you.
- "You Think They Don't Know"** – We sometimes think we get away with things because no one says anything to us about them. Wrong!
- "Quit Is The Ugliest Word"** – "Quit" is the most effective story killer ever invented.
- "What Kind of Conversation Are We Having?"** – YOU have control over what kind of conversation you will have with someone.
- "You're Not Talking About The Same Thing"** – Conflict comes from communication breakdown.
- "It Matters How YOU Say It"** – Watching your words, tone, and body language in communication.
- "I Say What I Say"** – We shouldn't always say what is on our minds. Communicate clearly, often, and appropriately.
- "You Oughta Serve Hotdogs"** – Realize that not everyone thinks like you, likes or dislikes what you do, or feels like

MENTORS

Jim Shearl.....JR Shearl & Associates, Owner
Scott Davis.....Chose 2 Change, Owner
Dan Grieser.....Bank of Gibson City, Loan Officer, VP
Milt KellyFisher Band Instructor, Retired
Bob Dickey.....Bob Dickey Sales, Owner
Pat MilchuckSimply Pat's Hats, Owner
Jeanine Litwiller.....Strictly Kids, Owner
Lois StalterFlower Etc, Ltd, Owner
Krista McCallisterCorner Store, Owner
Jenna Vogel.....Doug's Pharmacy, Owner
Lisa GregursonBank of Gibson City, VP
Sara Bielfeldt.....Expressions, Owner
Robin NiewoldPro-Type Printing, Owner
Del BannerBanner Ford Klaus LLP, Partner



THANK YOU!



INVESTORS



BOB DICKEY SALES

MURRAY ENTERPRISES

DAN & PAULA DICKEY



HEISER INSURANCE

**MOM & POP'S
KETTLE KORN STOP**

**GCMS EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION**

CEO BOARD OF DIRECTORS



ERIC STALTER

Chairman
Fisher National Bank



CHAD HESTERBERG

Chair Elect
Insurance Providers Group



BOB DICKEY

Eastern Illini Electric
Cooperative



JEREMY DARNELL

Gibson City Melvin Sibley
School District



JON KELLY

Fisher Jr/Sr High School



KELLY GRAVES

Kelly Graves Design



KRISTIN OYER

Paxton-Buckley-Loda School
District



NICK REUTTER

Farmers-Merchants Bank



SARA BIELFELDT

Expressions by Sara

PRAIRIELAND CEO PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

Class of 2019

REVENUE

INVESTORS\$53,000.00

FRIENDS OF CEO\$350.00

TOTAL..... \$53,350.00

EXPENSES

FACILITATOR SALARY \$14,569.76

OFFICE SUPPLIES\$555.70

PROGRAM EXPENSE\$996.00

TOTAL..... \$16,121.46

ENDING FUND BALANCE \$37,228.54

LIKE WHAT YOU SEE?

WANT TO BECOME A(N)

investor? mentor? guest speaker? business visit?

Shanna Hortin/Facilitator
217•649•6553

Eric Stalter/Chairman
217•898•0551

Nick Reutter/Board Member
217•379•4343
