

APRIL 2023 NEWSLETTER

AI for Business: Bewares and Boasts

At first glance, especially for people who have trouble writing or have difficulty starting out and collecting their thoughts at a keyboard, AI can feel like the smartest kid in the class offering to do your homework for free, forever. It seems like a huge win and I'm not saying it isn't. But there are a few things you should be aware of as well as some tasks it does tremendously well that could save you a lot of time and energy.

AI "Doesn't Always Get It Right"

Google's new Bard (AI) issued this statement to all users, "Bard will not always get it right. Bard may give inaccurate or inappropriate responses. When in doubt, use the 'Google it' button to check Bard's responses." This is true of all AI. AI is not a sentient being. It gets its answers and content by crawling the web and condensing information. Sometimes that can cause problems.

It doesn't:

- Fact check or verify stats and attributions/citations
- Sift out bad info (if that information is mentioned in a variety of places)

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President's Message

Jay Woodrum

This past weekend was our 2023 EXPO & Taste, and wow! What a great event! Seeing our community businesses, organizations, and the public all together was a sight to see. The number of booths were up and attendance was definitely up. Kids were smiling ear to ear when they saw the Easter Bunny and while they were hunting for eggs. Our stage shows that preformed were spectacular and all the treats from the Taste were outstanding. Seeing the community come together like this are some of the joys with being involved in the chamber.

But the month is not over yet. In couple weeks, we will be having our Annual Awards Banquet on April 20th. This will be a great evening of fun, dining, and entertainment as we recognize our chamber businesses and individuals. Throughout the evening, we will have entertainment provided by Howl at the Moon – Dueling Pianos. We will provide an update on what's happening with the chamber along with presenting over 5 different awards to chamber businesses and 3 scholarships to local students. This is shaping up to be another spectacular event that you will not want to miss!

If you would like to participate in the Annual Awards Banquet, sponsorships and tickets are available now. Email mtzionchamber@gmail.com for sponsorships or buy tickets

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UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 12th LUNCHEON

12:00-1:00 Luncheon
Fletcher Park Recreation Ctr.

PROGRAM

Chris Phillips
"Change Management
for Project Success"

Member cost \$15
RSVP by Tuesday, Apr. 11th

APRIL 3rd

Awards Banquet Sponsorships
and Award Nominations Due

APRIL 20th AWARDS BANQUET

Tickets or tables due
date is April 14th

APRIL 28th BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Decatur Earthmover
Credit Union

MAY 10th LUNCHEON

"New Illinois Laws Affecting
Businesses"
Matt Spain



April Luncheon



The April 12, 2023 luncheon will be at the Mt. Zion Fletcher Park Recreation Center. Chris Phillips, owner of The SOLVR Group, will present "Change Management for Project Success".

Coming up with the perfect solution to a problem, issue or process in your organization can sometimes come pretty easy. However, since we require people to implement the change, it can often times be stymied by resistance, fear and confusion from the organizational staff. The SOLVR Group knows how difficult this can be and has developed a number of tactics to help ease this pain. Come and listen to a few of their methods that can really improve your change management.

The SOLVR Group has over 20 years of experience in marketing, strategic development, and innovation disciplines. Their group has worked in the financial, civic, non-for-profit and distribution industries and has developed national marketing promotions, national sales incentive programs, new products and services and marketing strategies for hundreds of companies including FORTUNE 500 businesses.

The cost of our luncheon on April 12th is \$15. The luncheon starts at 12 noon; registration is from 11:30 - 12 noon. You can start going through the buffet line at 11:45 a.m. Hickory River Smokehouse will be our caterer.

Please send your RSVP to mtzionchamber@gmail.com by Tuesday, April 11th to submit your reservation at <https://www.mtzionchamber.org/events/meetings/>. If you are paying in advance on the website, be sure to send me your RSVP information with all the names of those attending from your business or organization. Optionally, you can still be invoiced or pay at the door.

2022-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Estate



Dan McNeely - Diamond Bros.
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Kim Rhodes - Physicians Choice
Wellness



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at <https://www.mtzionchamber/events>! Bring your friends, family, and co-workers out for this special evening. Our online silent auction provided by the Mike Hall Auction Co. is currently live at <https://tinyurl.com/jpfuatam> where you can find some great items donated by our chamber members (see page 5).

Thank you again to everyone involved in the EXPO & Taste; we look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming Luncheon and the Annual Awards Banquet.

Sincerely,
Jay Woodrum, President

Welcome New Member



Evan Hall is the owner of the Mike Hall Auction Co. They provide live auctions, online auctions, combination of live/online bidding to customers in either an on-site setting or away from premises. Mike Hall is an experienced farmland auctioneer and broker. In addition to live and online auctions, Mike Hall Auction Co. offers a simple new sale method called QuickSale, which is an easy way for businesses, farmers, municipalities, etc. to liquidate individual pieces of surplus machinery, vehicles, equipment, etc. You can contact the Mike Hall Auction Co. by calling 217-972-9986 or emailing evan@mikehallauction.com.

2023 Annual Awards Banquet

The Awards Banquet will be held Thursday, April 20th at the Mt. Zion Convention Center. The event will kick-off with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres from 5:30-6:30. There is an online auction with items donated from fellow MZCC chamber members that you can bid on now through 7:30 p.m. during the banquet; here is the link: <https://mikehallauction.hibid.com/catalog/443222>; this provides scholarships for next year.

After dinner, the program will follow with announcements of our Annual Report, Outstanding Business of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, New Business of the Year, Non-Profit of the Year, NEXt Awards, President's Choice Award, and Scholarship Awards. Tickets are available for \$50 each or table of 8 for \$350 by sending an email to Linda Harper at mtzionchamber@gmail.com. The due date is April 14, 2023. Bring your spouse or significant other for an enjoyable evening of food, drinks, and entertainment. This year's entertainment is Howl at the Moon Dueling Pianos.



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- Have any vested interest in producing SEO-rich content for you (unless you use an AI program that is created for that)
- Know what your audience responds to

AI Has Different Levels of Sophistication

There are many free options out there as well as AI/bot starters where you can build your own “in minutes.” It’s important to know that each one has different capabilities and claims—some have a plagiarism detector, for instance, so you needn’t worry about the copy it creates for you being flagged as duplicate content.

It’s Only as Good as What You Feed It

The real benefit of using AI lies in its ability to create content in a fraction of the time it takes for a human to write it. Even talented writers using dictation software or ones blessed with 100+ words per minute typing skills, can’t research and write a 300-word blog post in a minute.

But the content is only as good as the instructions you give it. For instance, if you were producing a blog post about Golden Retrievers, as a dog walker your blog would be different than that of a dog breeder/dog show participant, which would be different still from a vet’s perspective written for other vets. The level of sophistication and knowledge is different for each of those audiences. You will need to express that in the directions you provide the AI if you want a good piece of content that fits the needs and understanding of your audience.

Als Struggle with Same Names

When I asked Google’s AI Bard what Bard does really well as research for this article, it responded with things that a bard/storyteller excels at, not what it does. (However, when I asked “what do *you* do well?,” it provided a satisfactory answer. So, if your business shares a name with something else or you’re using a play on words or employing a name/word in a different context, the program may not produce helpful results.

5 Things AI Does Well

Now that you know what to watch out for, let’s cover a few things it does really well. Using AI for these things can save you lots of time.

- **Help you brainstorm.** If you’re rewriting your business tagline and you have part of it but can’t think of the perfect ending, try giving an AI writer a prompt such as, “help me finish my <insert type of business> tagline <insert what you have so far>.”
- **Come up with invite language.** Basic invite language is a breeze for AIs. Canva has one built in.
- **Write simple emails or letters.** Creating form letters can be a pain but not with AI. Feed it the necessary info and you can move on to a better use of your time.
- **Create an org chart.** Provide your positions and it will give you what you need.
- **Produce content without colorful language.** Many writers lament that the content AI creates is boring. It lacks colorful language and stories. While it can create stories for you, it won’t add a story example to a blog post. However, “boring” is not always bad. If you want to create content that lacks biased language AI might be the way to go. Don’t ditch your editor yet but I have not come across any use of language bias when employing an AI assistant.

Is using AI right for you and your business? Perhaps. But keep in mind, it is a tool, not an additional employee. It can produce content in a fraction of the time, but it requires oversight. It does not always generate content ready to be used as is. If you envision what it creates as a starting point product like how a sous chef does the prep work for a top chef, you have a good understanding of how you might use it in your business.

[Christina Metcalf](#) is a writer/ghostwriter who believes in the power of story.



THANK YOU

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SILVER SPONSORS



Easter Egg Hunt - Decatur Earthmover Credit Union
Easter Coloring Contest - Eagle Ridge of Decatur
Golden Ticket Expo Game - Scott State Bank
Photo Booth - The Party Shop



MT. ZION CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENTS

THE ANNUAL

Awards Banquet

REPORT & AUCTION

MT. ZION CONVENTION CENTER
1400 Mount Zion Pkwy Mt. Zion, IL 62549



THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2023
EVENT BEGINS AT 5:30PM

Join Us!

An elegant evening of dining and entertainment as we recognize and celebrate the achievements of businesses and individuals from our community.

ENTERTAINMENT BY:
Howl at the Moon - Dueling Pianos



Banquet Tickets \$50 each or Tables of 8 at \$350 per table

ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY

Ticket Purchasing Deadline: April 14, 2023

Purchase Tickets at: <https://www.mtzionchamber.org/events/>

To order a Table for 8 by emailing: mtzionilchamber@gmail.com

Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet Auction

Online Only Auction

MIKE HALL AUCTION CO.
1400 Mt. Zion Pkwy (Mt. Zion Convention Center)
Mt. Zion, IL 62549

Date(s) 3/31/2023 - 4/20/2023

Bidding Opens: March 31st- 4 PM Bidding Closes: April 20th - 7:30 PM

This auction is being held online and in conjunction with the Annual Chamber Awards and Banquet Auction. The donated lots are compliments of local businesses, please bid to support the chamber!

Bidding Open

Online-Only Auction

Shipping Not Available

You can still send
Linda more auction
items to be added.



Share On:
Facebook Twitter Email Print

Lot 1 | VISA \$200 GIFT CARD

☆ Watch



High Bid:110.00 USD

16 Bids

17d 11h 18m

Lot 2 | MURPHY & CO. PICNIC BASKET W/PICNIC ITEMS

☆ Watch



High Bid:17.50 USD

5 Bids

Lot 3 | PEERLESS GIFT CERTIFICATES, COFFEE & MORE!

☆ Watch



High Bid:1.00 USD

1 Bid

Lot 4 | AVON MOVIE TICKETS

☆ Watch



High Bid:20.00 USD

8 Bids

17d 11h 19m

Lot 5 | RED KETTLE BLEND COFFEE BASKET

☆ Watch



High Bid:3.00 USD

2 Bids

17d 11h 20m

Lot 6 | GUITAR SIGNED BY CHRISTIAN ARTIST MATTHEW WEST

☆ Watch



High Bid:70.00 USD

15 Bids

17d 11h 20m

Lot 7 | UB SALON \$50 GIFT CARD

☆ Watch



High Bid:1.00 USD

1 Bid

17d 11h 21m

Lot 8 | UB SALON \$50 GIFT CARD

☆ Watch



High Bid:1.00 USD

1 Bid

17d 11h 21m

Lot 9 | UB SALON \$50 GIFT CARD

☆ Watch



High Bid:0.00 USD

0 Bids

17d 11h 22m

Lot 10 | UB SALON \$50 GIFT CARD

☆ Watch



High Bid:0.00 USD

0 Bids

17d 11h 22m

Lot 11 | AFLAC & MT. ZION DEL'S POPCORN GIFT

☆ Watch



High Bid:7.50 USD

4 Bids

17d 11h 23m

Lot 12 | PASTOR ROB'S CHEESECAKE

☆ Watch



High Bid:5.00 USD

3 Bids

17d 11h 23m

Lot 13 | \$50 GIFT CARD TO RED LOBSTER

☆ Watch



High Bid:10.00 USD

7 Bids

17d 11h 24m

Lot 14 | CORONA/CHICAGO BULLS COOLER

☆ Watch



High Bid:22.50 USD

7 Bids

17d 11h 24m

Lot 15 | APEX PHYSICAL THERAPY WELLNESS BASKET

☆ Watch



High Bid:22.50 USD

4 Bids

17d 11h 25m

Lot 16 | WEBER 22 INCH CHARCOAL GRILL HOT ROD YELLOW

☆ Watch



High Bid:150.00 USD

17 Bids

17d 11h 25m

Lot 17 | LUNCH ON THE GO

☆ Watch



High Bid:5.00 USD

2 Bids

17d 11h 26m

Lot 18 | BOOK LOVER'S GIFT BASKET

☆ Watch



High Bid:27.50 USD

5 Bids

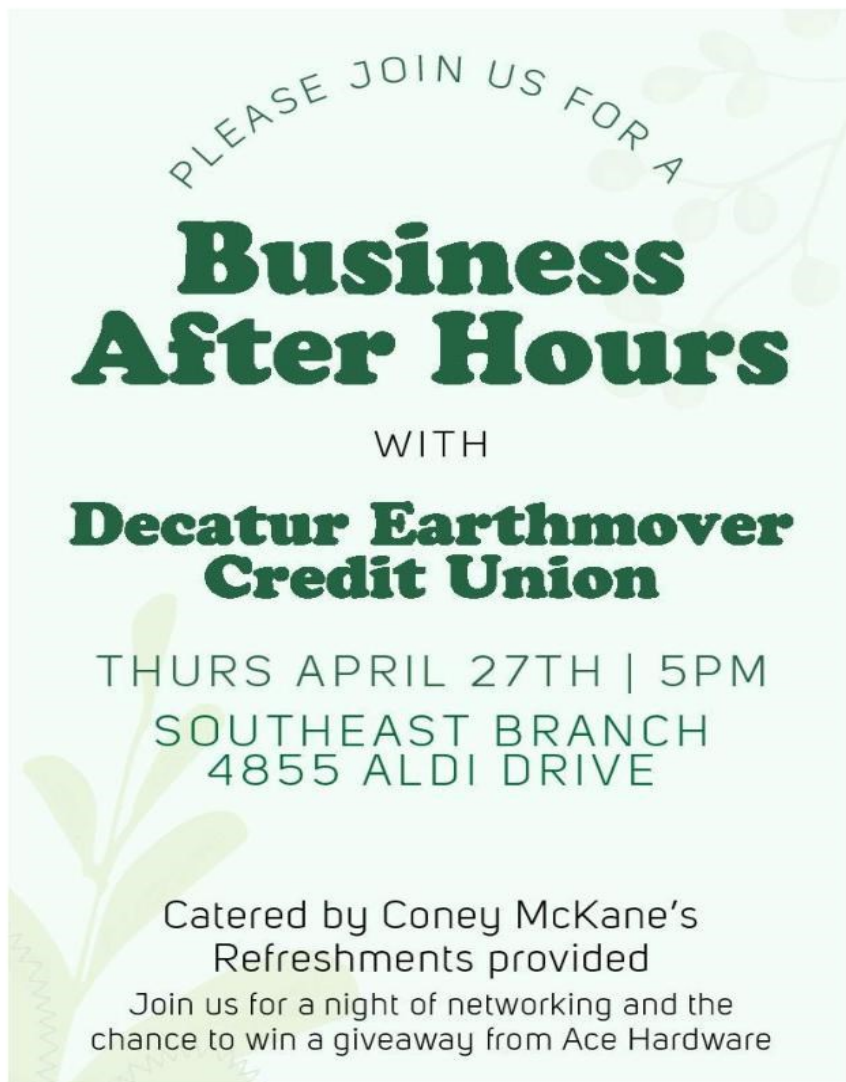
17d 11h 26m



Decatur Earthmover Credit Union Business After Hours & Open House

Thursday, April 27, 2023 from 5-7 p.m.

- Mix, mingle, and enjoy refreshments
- Take a tour and enter the drawing
- Network & share your business cards



Join Us for
"ACAPALOOZA 2023!"

Celebrating 26 years of a cappella harmony at MTZHS

Date: Friday, May 12, 2023

Location: Mt. Zion High School

305 S. Henderson St. Mt. Zion, IL 62549

Time: Show starts at 7pm, Doors open at 6:30pm

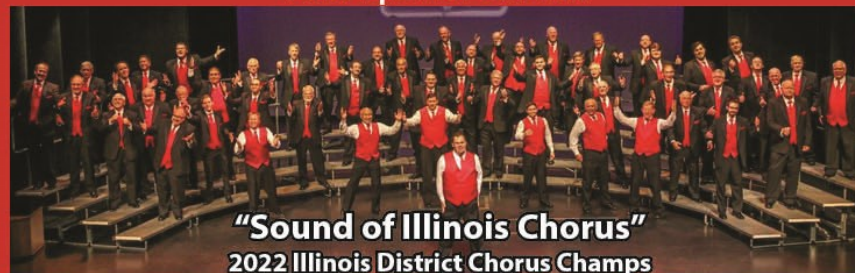
Ticket price - \$15 adults, \$5 students (All seats general admission, No reserve seating)

Tickets go on sale March 31 - Scan QR code below or available at the door.

Featuring: Mt. Zion Student Acappella Quartets and Ensembles, including:



And Special Guests:



Scan code below to order tickets:



or the website at

<https://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/72299>

For more information,
contact Rich Hansen at
hansenr@mtzschools.org

This program is sponsored by the
following organizations:



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www.DecaturHomes.com



ACTIVE LISTINGS

| Address | Details | Price | MLS # |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| 270 E Mueller Ct | LAND/LOT Gated subdivision/.65 acres | Upper \$20's | 6223435 |
| 615 W Harper Ave | REDUCED PRICE! 2 bdr/1 bth/RANCH/1 car detached garage/near park | Upper \$50's | 6226336 |
| 2960 Wasson Way | NEW LISTING! 3 bdr/1.5 bth/near Lake Decatur/RANCH/1 car garage | Upper \$80's | 6226419 |
| 731 W Main St | MULTI FAMILY NEW LISTING! 5 units/rear parking lot/great investment prop | Upper \$90's | 6226589 |
| 462 W William St | COMMERCIAL LISTING -Downtown Decatur/2525 sq ft/multi-office space | Lower \$120's | 6225720 |
| 701 W Prairie Ave | MULTI FAMILY NEW LISTING! 10 units/rear parking lot/great investment prop | Upper \$150's | 6226577 |
| 700 & 726 E Cerro Gordo | COMMERCIAL LISTING -2 bdr/7 bth/22920 sq ft/3 floors/freight elevator | \$224k | 6225030 |

Active/Under Contract Listings

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| 1245 E Willard Ave | 2 bdr/1 bth/2.5 car detached garage/remodeled interior | Lower \$40's | 6225703 |
| 157 W Andrews (Macon,IL) | UNDER CONTRACT IN 58 DAYS!! | Upper \$60's | 6225891 |
| 1341 S Maffit St | UNDER CONTRACT IN 14 DAYS!! | Upper \$60's | 6226442 |
| 1939 E MillStone Rd | UNDER CONTRACT IN 16 DAYS!! | Upper \$70's | 6226393 |
| 2930 Wasson Way | UNDER CONTRACT IN 14 DAYS!! | Lower \$80's | 6226401 |
| 131 Isabella Dr | 3 bdr/1 bth RANCH South Shores/1.5 car garage/new HVAC | Upper \$80's | 6225242 |
| 10906 Hibbard Rd (Macon,IL) | 3bdr/2 bth/RANCH/1.5 acres/2 story outbuilding | Upper \$290's | 6225301 |
| 6362 Autumn Ridge Ct | UNDER CONTRACT IN 30 DAYS!! | Upper \$370's | 6226181 |

Pending Listings

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| 425 N 18 th St Decatur | UNDER CONTRACT IN 21 DAYS!! | \$19k | 6226200 |
| 327 E Garfield Ave | UNDER CONTRACT IN 10 DAYS!! | \$29k | 6226357 |
| 1840 Buckhead Lane (LOT) | LOT | \$39K | 6226659 |
| 226 E Highland Dr (Forsyth,IL) | UNDER CONTRACT IN 2 DAYS!! | \$108K | 6226314 |
| 27 Arizona Dr | UNDER CONTRACT IN 1 DAY!! | \$109k | 6226165 |
| 3823 N Northbrook Dr | UNDER CONTRACT IN 3 DAYS!! | \$163K | 6226296 |
| 820 S McKinney Ln | 3 bdr/3 bth/indoor - inground pool/hot tub/.95 acres | \$169k | 6223224 |
| 4616 Lawson Dr | UNDER CONTRACT IN 1 DAY!! | \$198K | 6226607 |
| 5605 Elliott Ct | UNDER CONTRACT IN 47 DAYS!! | \$279k | 6225698 |



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