

## JULY 2023 NEWSLETTER

### Be Unforgettable: Standout at Networking Events

#### Why Should You Attend a Networking Event?

You either love networking or hate it, right? But networking events can be invaluable opportunities for you to expand your professional network, forge valuable partnerships, learn of opportunities before anyone else, and ultimately grow your business and/or career. Plus, they can be fun.

Still, when there are so many people in a room all trying to do the same thing you are—meet new connections—standing out in a crowd and making a lasting impression can be a challenge. But a necessary one because you want them to think of you when they need something. Let's explore the best ways for you to be memorable at the next chamber networking event, so you can meet potential clients, collaborators, and industry influencers.

#### Ways to Be More Memorable When Networking

Before we get into being memorable, it's important to set a goal. Don't go in hoping to meet "someone good." Good means a lot of things. Do you want a good customer, a good business partner, a good influencer, a good friend, a good caterer...you get the idea. Knowing who you

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### JULY 12th LUNCHEON

12:00-1:00 Luncheon  
Mt. Zion Fletcher Park  
Recreation Center

#### PROGRAM

Temethia Joyner  
"Young Leaders in Action—A  
Year of Service & Leadership"

Member cost \$15  
RSVP by Tuesday, July 11th

#### JULY 3rd INDEPENDENCE DAY 50/50 DRAWING

Mt. Zion Blue Ribbon Night  
Fletcher Park  
c. 9:30 p.m.

#### JULY 19th Secure Choice Q & A 11 a.m.

#### JULY 20th CHICKEN DINNER First Baptist Church 4:30-6:30

#### AUGUST 9th LUNCHEON "2023-2024 Mt. Zion School District Update" Mt. Zion Convention Center



## President's Message

Shelly Coslow

Hello Everyone,

It's July - Happy Birthday America!! I hope you all have a wonderful and safe holiday weekend celebrating our country.

The Chamber Board is working hard toward continuing business growth and development in our community. Here are some amazing opportunities:

- A. **Member Spotlight** opportunity - If your business has not taken advantage of this great marketing opportunity, please consider. Member spotlight is where you can receive a **FREE** marketing campaign for your business. This includes recognition to your business with **FREE** radio advertising. Just fill out the Member Spotlight form on our website at: <https://www.mtzionchamber.org/events/member-spotlight/>.
- B. **Monthly Luncheons** – This is a great networking opportunity for your business. The Chamber luncheons are held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. The board strives to schedule great speakers for the luncheon program.

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## July Luncheon



The July 12, 2023 luncheon will be at the Mt. Zion Fletcher Park Recreation Center at 323 Fletcher Park Boulevard, Mt. Zion, IL 62549. The cost of our luncheon on July 12th is \$15. The luncheon starts at 12 noon; registration is from 11:30 - 12 noon.

Temethia Joyner will present "Young Leaders in Action—A Year of Service & Leadership." Mrs. Joyner is the program facilitator of Macon County's Young Leaders in Action (YLIA) group. This fall will be her nineteenth-year teaching for the Decatur Public School District. She is an ABAR (Anti-Bias, Anti-Racist) certified educator currently teaching at Montessori Academy for Peace.

Please send your RSVP to [mtzionchamber@gmail.com](mailto:mtzionchamber@gmail.com) by Tuesday, July 11th for the July 12th luncheon or you can submit your reservation at <https://www.mtzionchamber.org/events/meetings/>. If you are paying in advance on the web-site, 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.

This is the last luncheon for the 2022-2023 prepaid luncheons, which went from August 1, 2022–July 31, 2023. More information is in this newsletter and will be emailed out separately to the membership.

The Any Queen 50/50 is up to \$109.

## 2023-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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The Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce loves its member businesses and wants you to learn more about them by bringing you this month's Member Spotlight—LaGondola Spaghetti House. Are you craving authentic Italian food? Look no further than LaGondola Spaghetti House in Decatur! Their home-style Italian food is made fresh daily with the finest ingredients. From their classic spaghetti and meatballs with garlic bread to their popular torpedoes; they have something for everyone. Come dine at 2825 N. Water St. or call 217- 875-4888 to place your order.



President's Message continued from [page 1](#):

- C. **Luncheon Exhibitor** – Showcase your business in a 5-to-10-minute presentation at a monthly luncheon. There is no MZCC charge for being an Exhibitor.
- D. **Business After Hours** – Host a business after hours event at your business. This draws in members and community members to your business. There is no MZCC charge for having a Business After Hours.
- E. **Are you hiring?** We will post your opening; all you have to do is fill out the form at <https://www.mtzionchamber.org/jobs-openings/submit-a-job-posting/>.

These are just a few ways for your business to get more community exposure. To make the most of your membership, we strongly encourage you to get involved and participate in the activities of the chamber. Upcoming events are the Blue Ribbons Night this weekend, chicken dinner and the Mt. Zion Community Prayer Breakfast. Become a sponsor. Check this newsletter for all the dates and times and take advantage of these events.

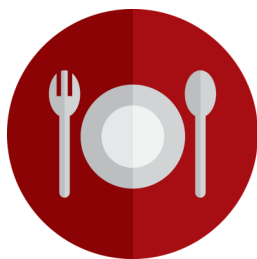
Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and your business!

Sincerely,  
Shelly Coslow



### STATE REQUIRED RETIREMENT PLAN BY NOV. 1, 2023

Illinois Secure Choice Act requires businesses with five more Illinois employees and who have been in business for more than two years to either sponsor their own retirement plan or facilitate Illinois Secure Choice, a state-funded retirement program. The deadline for employers with 5 to 15 employees is November 1, 2023. There are additional details at [Illinois Secure Choice \(ilsecurechoice.com\)](https://ilsecurechoice.com). See [page 8 & 9](#) for more information.



### PREPAID LUNCHEONS

The current prepaid luncheons end as of the July 12, 2023 luncheon. Your 2022-2023 prepaid luncheons are available for \$150 per person for August 2023-July 2024; that is one luncheon per month for 12 months. The regular price of our luncheons is \$15, which costs \$180; our \$150 prepaid luncheons is a \$30 savings for the year or brings the price per luncheon down to \$12.50 each. Email [mtzionchamber@gmail.com](mailto:mtzionchamber@gmail.com) by August 8, 2023 if you wish to be invoiced for prepaid luncheons.



### BE UNFORGETTABLE continued from [page 1](#)

want to meet will help you devise a plan to be more memorable. Just as you would use different bait to attract a shark versus a deer, you'll want to decide who you want to meet before working on how to be more memorable. Keep your goal in mind as you:

#### Shift the Focus

It can be awkward walking into a group or up to a person you don't know. Most event hosts (especially the chamber) will be glad to introduce you to someone. Once they do, avoid awkward

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*Be Unforgettable continued from [page 4](#):*

ward moments by focusing on the person you've just been introduced to. Asking someone what they do is good but often elicits a very short phrase, "I'm a lawyer," for instance. Then you might say, "Wow. Great. My cousin's a lawyer." This conversation isn't very memorable. On the other hand, if you ask them "What are you working on that you're really excited about?" They're going to open up. Another great hot topic is AI. Ask them if they're using it or what they think about it. Get them talking about themselves, their preferences, their knowledge/experience and listen. Speaking of...

#### **Be a Genuine Listener**

One of the most effective ways to be memorable is by being an active and engaged listener. Show genuine interest in the person you're conversing with, and ask thoughtful questions about their business, challenges, and goals. By listening attentively, you can demonstrate you value their insights and build a meaningful connection. People remember those who make them feel heard and understood.

#### **Craft a Memorable Personal Story**

Stories are powerful tools for connecting with others on an emotional level and they're easy to remember. Develop a personal story that highlights your journey, passion, and the impact your business has made. Share it in a concise and engaging manner, leaving a lasting impression on your listeners. Remember, a well-crafted personal story is not a monologue. The story may be about you, but it must have a broader appeal. You want someone to hear your story and be inspired to do something in their own lives, not feel like they're watching a one-person, off-Broadway show.

#### **Dress the Part**

Follow the event's dress code but wear something you love. Your appearance reflects your brand's image, and wearing a favorite item will help you appear confident, credible, and approachable. Wear something that showcases your style and is memorable without being silly (unless your business is silly, then go for it). For instance, a consultant I know always wears a hat; the kind of hat is dependent on the occasion. A dog walker may always wear dog jewelry. An author of a pirate book may wear a chain with a gold doubloon. These branding elements help them be more memorable.

#### **Use Creative and Memorable Marketing Materials**

Stand out from the crowd by designing unique and memorable business cards, marketing materials, or giveaways. Incorporate your brand's visual identity and ensure that the design aligns with your overall messaging. Add a personal touch, such as a hand-written note or a relevant quote, to leave a lasting impression. People often keep creative marketing materials, making them a powerful tool for staying top-of-mind.

#### **Be "On" at All Times**

Have you ever watched a video that shows a celebrity or a VIP when they don't know there's a camera or mic on them? Sometimes it ends badly, and they say (or do) something that is out of character for how the rest of the world perceives them. The same can happen in a networking event. Don't have a great event exuding graciousness, then step into your car and lean on your horn only to find out the person you're making rude gestures to is the individual you thought you had a great connection with only minutes earlier. Remember, as a businessperson, people aren't just looking to do business with you at the event. They want to see that you're the same person on the clock and off.

Networking events provide you with a platform to showcase your expertise, expand your connections, and leave a memorable impression. By getting others talking, being an engaged listener, sharing a compelling personal story, using great materials, and staying "on," you can create lasting relationships that will benefit your business. Be authentic, be memorable, and let your passion shine through. Those types of actions are infectious.

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

# **Drawing July 3, 2023 at the Mt. Zion Blue Ribbon Night at Fletcher Park**

Tickets will be sold at the Mt. Zion Blue Ribbon Night prior to the fireworks. Blue Ribbon Night starts at 5 p.m. The winning number will be announced just before the fireworks and posted on our Facebook page at mtzchamber and as our outgoing message on our Chamber number at 217-864-2526.



## **INDEPENDENCE DAY 50/50 RAFFLE**

*Tickets Only \$1 each*



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## **Drive-up Chicken Dinner**

**Thursday, July 20, 2023**

**Pick up 4:30-6:30 pm**

**First Baptist Church of Mt. Zion Parking Lot  
720 W. Main Street, Mt. Zion**

**Only \$13**

**Make checks payable to the  
Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce**

**Includes: 1/2 Grilled Chicken, Green Beans, Mashed Potatoes and Gravy, Roll & Butter, & Subway cookie**

**Buy tickets by July 17, 2023 at**

**<https://www.mtzionchamber.org/events>**

**or**

**Tickets can also be purchased at the following  
Mt. Zion businesses: Busey Bank, Del's Popcorn,  
Prairie State Bank, Scott State Bank, Village of  
Mt. Zion, or by calling 217-864-2526.**



Illinois Secure Choice: Expanding Retirement Savings Access for Illinois Workers Per State law, employers with 5 or more Illinois employees that have been in business for at least 2 years and that don't offer a tax-qualified retirement plan are required to register for and facilitate Illinois Secure Choice or adopt their own qualified plan.

Through Illinois Secure Choice, Illinois workers can save for retirement through Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) funded by payroll deductions. The program is facilitated by the State of Illinois and administered by a professional financial services firm. Employers do not pay any fees, make contributions, or have any fiduciary responsibility – they simply facilitate employee payroll deductions and keep their employee rosters current.

The registration/exemption deadline for businesses that had an average of 5-15 Illinois employees in 2022 is November 1, 2023. Businesses in this enrollment group will receive correspondence directly from Illinois Secure Choice via mailed letters, and in some cases, emails as well, starting this summer. Correspondence will outline next steps.

In the meantime, business owners can learn more about the program and access resources by:

- Visiting the program website [ilsecurechoice.com](https://ilsecurechoice.com)
- Attending a live employer overview webinar on July 19, 2023 at 11 a.m. (see [page 9](#))

This information was received from:

## DEANNA VERDUIN | DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SECURE CHOICE

Illinois State Treasurer Michael W. Frerichs

Marine Bank Building – 1 East Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield IL 62701  
217.524.7575 (o)







# Webinar / Q & A

## Illinois Secure Choice: What Small Business Owners Need to Know about the IL State Law

**Date:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023

**Time:** 11:00 a.m. (30-60 minutes)

### Login Information:

#### Microsoft Teams

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 292 881 153 173

Passcode: NBxqKJ

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

#### Join with a video conferencing device

[isto@m.webex.com](mailto:isto@m.webex.com)

Video Conference ID: 117 062 846 0

[Alternate VTC instructions](#)

#### Or call in (audio only)

+1 708-416-6336, 626266148# United States, Cicero

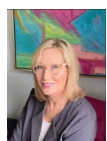
Phone Conference ID: 626 266 148#

Illinois state law now requires that every private-sector employer that has been in business for at least 2 years and that had 5 or more Illinois employees last year must offer their own qualified retirement plan or facilitate the Illinois Secure Choice retirement savings program. In this session, the Illinois State Treasurer's Office will cover the specifics of the state law and provide an overview of how Illinois Secure Choice works and how easy it is for businesses to facilitate retirement savings for their employees.

### Presenters:



Christine Cheng serves as Director of Secure Choice for the Illinois State Treasurer's Office. In her role, she oversees implementation and expansion of Illinois Secure Choice to improve retirement savings access for private-sector workers, helping to ensure that more Illinoisans can retire with dignity.



Jaimee Niles is the Illinois relationship manager for Ascensus, the third-party administrator for the Illinois Secure Choice program. In her role, she is the key point of contact for employers as they learn about and facilitate the Illinois Secure Choice program. Her focus is to both educate and support employers throughout the onboarding and administration process of the program and be a resource to employees who want to better understand their savings opportunities so they can make an informed decision about their participation in the program.



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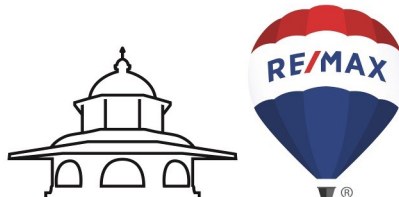


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(ALL LOCATIONS IN DECATUR, IL UNLESS LISTED OTHERWISE)

## ACTIVE LISTINGS

Address	Details	Price	MLS #
1035 E Whitmer St	2 bdr/1 bth/brick bungalow/fireplace/full basement/shed	Upper \$40's	6226839
615 W Harper Ave	<b>REDUCED PRICE!</b> 2 bdr/1 bth/RANCH/1 car detached garage/near park	Upper \$50's	6226336
131 Isabella Dr	<b>REDUCED PRICE!</b> 3 bdr/1 bth RANCH South Shores/1.5 car garage	Upper \$70's	6225242
2960 Wasson Way	3 bdr/1.5 bth/near Lake Decatur/Corner Lot/fenced yard/1 car garage	Middle \$80's	6226419
2678 S 35 <sup>th</sup> St	3 bdr/2 bth/4 season sunroom/all appliances/2.5 car attached garage	Upper \$140's	6227810
731 E Bill Wall Dr(Niantic)	3 bdr/2 bth/wood deck/serene neighborhood/2.5 car attached garage	Upper \$140's	6227776
3204 N Oakland Ave	4 bdr/2.5 bth/pool/tri-level home w/basement/2583 sq ft/corner lot	Middle \$150's	6227941
700 & 726 E Cerro Gordo	<b>COMMERCIAL LISTING</b> -2 bdr/7 bth/22920 sq ft/3 floors/freight elevator	Upper \$190's	6225030
6362 Autumn Ridge Ct	<b>REDUCED PRICE!</b> 4 bdr/3 bth/Birchwood Estates RANCH/1.63 acres	Upper \$360's	6226181
2 Brantley Ct (Taylorville)	<b>REDUCED PRICE!</b> 4 bdr/3 bth/.58 acres/exquisite kitchen/40x40 outbuilding	Upper \$430's	6227398

## Active/Under Contract Listings

2826 E Marcella Dr	<b>UNDER CONTRACT IN 5 DAYS!!</b>	\$99,897	6227877
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## Pending Listings

270 E Mueller Ct (LOT)	<b>LAND/LOT</b> Gated subdivision/.65 acres	\$9,897	6223435
355 E Mueller Ct (LOT)	<b>UNDER CONTRACT IN 23 DAYS!!</b>	\$19,897	6227411
365 E Mueller Ct (LOT)	<b>UNDER CONTRACT IN 0 DAYS!!</b>	\$30,000	6227781
3444 E Fulton Ave	<b>UNDER CONTRACT IN 1 DAY!!</b>	\$39,897	6227272
2704 E Garfield Ave	<b>UNDER CONTRACT IN 3 DAYS!!</b>	\$44,897	6227740
2930 Wasson Way	3 bdr/1.5 bth/fireplace/near Lake Decatur/fenced yard	Lower \$80's	6226401
245 E Prairie St (Argenta)	<b>UNDER CONTRACT IN 49 DAYS!!</b>	Upper \$190's	6226630
2683 S Forrest Green Dr	<b>UNDER CONTRACT IN 4 DAYS!!</b>	\$244,897	6227470



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