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BUSINESS JOURNAL FOR NWLA

JANUARY 2022



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FROM THE PUBLISHER ▼

Finding your purpose in 2022



SPECHT

It may seem odd to you that I am on the cover of this month's BIZ. Magazine. I know it is odd to me. It is also that this "January"

edition is on the streets before January begins. Both of these things are odd to me. Allow me to explain the reasoning behind both.

First, there is apparent nepotism and self promotion with the cover story. Ok, you've got me there — well sorta. You see, the mission of BIZ has always been to educate and inform folks in the business community to help them do what they do better. Yes, we are a business news journal, but we are also a businessperson improvement publication.

If you think about it, BIZ has always provided opportunities for business person development and growth. From the columns we publish each month from experts in their respective fields, to events like the BIZ. Breakfast, 21st Century Business Forum and more, this new course is just a natural progression of that mission. How it came into being was nothing short of miraculous.

A little over one year ago, two of my closest friends and associates

approached me with the idea of creating a course that would help people become the best version of themselves by teaching them the steps they needed to take to achieve purpose in life. Sounds lofty, doesn't it?

My friend, Tom Hammel, had just released his Amazon best-seller, *The Life You're Meant to Lead*, and he was searching for a way to take some of the principles in the book a step further. Dave Ross, a mutual friend of ours in the leadership and health space, came to the table with a "dreamer's perspective." Dave is really good at helping people dream and see their world through a different lens. The three of us knew we had unique gifts and abilities to bring to the project, so we decided to make it happen.

First thing we realized was we needed to be more practical than lofty. There is plenty of content out there about finding one's purpose, but just about nothing on how to make that happen.

After several meetings, including two trips to California to shoot video, we completed *Step Into Purpose: Life Purpose Development Course*. You can learn all about it in this edition of the magazine.

Now, why the early edition? That is simple — timing. With BIZ

hitting the streets on Dec. 23, our readers can contemplate what they want to do in their own life, before New Year's Day. I am well aware of the fact that many readers may not be in a "self improvement state of mind" right now, but in just three days, that will most likely change.

The week between Christmas and New Year's Day is usually a down time for many business people. However, they don't just shut down and walk away. We all have thoughts, plans, and maybe resolutions, we are contemplating during this time. *Step Into Purpose* will hopefully be a part of those thoughts. Taking action before Jan. 1 will help you be prepared to hit the ground running as soon as the holidays end.

So, take a few minutes to read about *Step Into Purpose*, and make the decision for yourself. If it is a fit for your dreams and goals for 2022, great. If not, all good too. Just be sure to do something that takes you one, or more, steps closer to achieving your purpose in this world. This world needs you to do that.

Happy New Year.

DAVID A. SPECHT JR. IS
PUBLISHER AND EDITOR OF BIZ.
AND PRESIDENT OF SPECHT
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BIZ.
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BPCC's N.O.W. College

Making College Work for Working Adults



BATEMAN

A new initiative at Bossier Parish Community College is aimed at meeting the education and training needs of the region's working adults. The Nights, Online, and Week-end College (NOW) will be launched in the summer of 2022 and provide an expanded menu of certificate and degree offerings in a flexible format with classes scheduled in the evenings, on weekends, in person or online. This new effort is timed to take advantage of a new scholarship opportunity for adults—the M.J. Foster Promise Scholarship.

The programs offered through BPCC's NOW College are designed to fit the busy lifestyle of

today's working adult and to align with workforce needs in our region. The programs will range from short-term, high-value certifications to associate degrees in disciplines such as healthcare, cyber, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, gaming and hospitality. Students with previous college coursework can be fast-tracked to completion as can students who earn credit for prior learning for work experience.

Adult learners require flexibility in the scheduling of courses and BPCC's NOW College has responded by making training available in the evenings and on Saturday and by delivering the content through hybrid approaches in eight-week mini-terms. These strategies will allow busy adults to focus on one or two courses at a time while also main-

taining a pace to complete a degree program in two years while balancing their personal and professional commitments.

The new M.J. Foster Promise Scholarship was approved by the Legislature in 2021 and will go into effect in July of 2022. This innovative scholarship program is designed to support adult learners interested in education and training that leads to high-wage, high-demand employment aligned to Louisiana's workforce priorities. NOW College is how BPCC is making adjustments that build the infrastructure to better support adult learners who will, beginning this summer, have access to a funding stream to support their educational endeavors.

DR. RICK BATEMAN IS CHANCELLOR OF BOSSIER PARISH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BIZ. BRIEFS ▼

TERNIUM USA TO INVEST \$98 MILLION IN SHREVEPORT FACILITY EXPANSION

Ternium USA Inc. is planning to expand its facility at the Port of Caddo-Bossier with an investment of \$98 million. The company is retaining 157 jobs, and the project will create 35 new direct jobs with an average salary of \$69,000, plus benefits. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 98 indirect jobs, for a total of 133 new jobs in Louisiana's Northwest Region.

Ternium, a leading steel producer in the Americas, is adding a second coil coating paint line with annual capacity of 120,000 tons, which will increase its production capacity in the U.S. by 53 percent, among other improvements. The coil coating process consists of cleaning, treating and painting flat sheet metal that is rolled into coils. The reinvestment in the Shreveport facility is the latest addition to Ternium's goal of providing a full menu of state-of-the-art options for the metal building industry.

"Louisiana's manufacturing industry provides thousands of good jobs across our state, and I am excited to announce an investment that

will continue the growth of this key sector of our economy," Gov. John Bel Edwards said. "Ternium's expansion at the Port of Caddo-Bossier will bring new jobs and economic momentum to the Northwest Region of our state. Ternium's decision to reinvest in its Shreveport plant is a testament to Louisiana's welcoming business climate, highly skilled workforce, and world-class transportation infrastructure."

Construction on the facility expansion will commence in the first quarter of 2022. The company expects commercial operations at the added production line to begin by mid 2024.

"This new coil coating expansion in Shreveport is part of our strategy to support the joint growth of our company and that of our loyal customers by adding complementary volume, range, and services to our existing local platform," said Michael Guhl, President of Ternium USA. "We are thankful to Governor Edwards and the LED team for their tireless work on behalf of the greater Shreveport community and their support for local manufacturing, and

we look forward to continuing to invest in our people and production capabilities."

To secure the project at the Port of Caddo-Bossier, the State of Louisiana provided Ternium with a competitive incentive package that includes the comprehensive services of LED FastStart – the No. 1 workforce development program in the nation for the past 12 years. Additionally, the company will receive a \$1 million performance-based award from the Economic Development Award Program to support infrastructure costs. The company is expected to utilize the state's Quality Jobs and Industrial Tax Exemption programs.

"We are excited for Ternium USA's continued commitment to Caddo Parish," said Caddo Commission President Lyndon B. Johnson. "Ternium's \$98 million-dollar investment to enhance production capabilities at the Port of Caddo-Bossier creates additional high paying jobs for our citizens, and widens the economic footprint in Caddo Parish. We look forward to the possibilities that this investment will bring."

"Ternium USA strengthens our community, and by adding these new and retained well-paying jobs, they are continuing to make a notable impact," said Justyn Dixon, President and CEO of the North Louisiana Economic Partnership. "We are proud to have such a strong company solidify their commitment to the region through continued investment and job creation. This significant investment speaks highly of the Caddo Parish community and is evidence that North Louisiana can win when it comes to advanced manufacturing."

"This is exciting news for The Port of Caddo-Bossier and Northwest Louisiana," said Eric England, Executive Port Director. "Our team's priority is to build a strong working relationship with all of our tenants, while fulfilling our mission to be an important economic engine for Caddo and Bossier Parishes. So, when one of our current tenants announces an expansion like this with new jobs for the area, it shows we're doing our job."

GAMING ▼

DiamondJacks returning is a marriage of convenience at best



SPECHT

When voters in St. Tammany Parish rejected the idea of locating a casino there, it set into motion the possibility of DiamondJacks, or whatever it is called now, to reopen in Bossier City.

Peninsula Pacific Entertainment, a California-based developer, was waiting for voter approval to build a \$325 million, 120-acre hotel and casino near Slidell. Voters rejected the “Camellia Bay” project, 63%-37%.

Now, they have 60 days to reopen in Bossier City, or risk losing their casino license, according to multiple reports. The situation begs the question, “Do we really want them back?”

When casino gaming came to northwest

Louisiana in the 90s, the Isle of Capri, which is now the shuttered DiamondJacks, was the first casino boat on the Bossier side of the Red River. Claiming itself a victim of pandemic-related shutdowns, DiamondJacks closed its doors in 2020.

For nearly two years, the shuttered casino and hotel complex has been the first thing people see as they begin to drive on the north end of the Arthur Ray Teague Parkway. It’s not exactly the image of a progressive, growing community that leaders want to portray.

Meanwhile, the other five casinos in the SBC, plus Harrah’s Louisiana Downs, have continued operations, making sacrifices and hard choices to ride out this unforeseen market adjustment. In fact, they have also given back to the community as they could through

events, donations, sponsorships, etc.

Why would we want to split the gaming pie seven ways just because voters in St. Tammany left Peninsula Pacific Entertainment at the altar?

While we may not be able to keep DiamondJacks from reopening, which is almost guaranteed to be temporary. We can avoid offering incentives and infrastructure to assist the process.

I am not one to hold grudges, but I know marriage of convenience when I see one. Let’s be faithful to those who stayed faithful to us. We owe our other casino partners that much.

DAVID A. SPECHT JR. IS PUBLISHER AND EDITOR OF BIZ. AND PRESIDENT OF SPECHT NEWSPAPERS, INC.

HEALTH ▼

A realistic resolution



TYNES

You can’t make a serious resolution to be healthier in the new year without making your overall health and wellness a priority. Knowing how to determine health goals and understanding health risks can better align your progress in creating a new you in 2022. The most realistic way to prioritize health and

keep a resolution to be healthier is by scheduling a visit to a primary care physician – you know, the one you might be putting off or previously talked yourself out of.

An annual check-up can help you create goals and make necessary lifestyle changes focused on improving your health by gaining insight from a trusted health care expert and partner. During your visit, a clinician will take your vitals, perform a physical exam and have an important conversation to understand your family and medical history, social environment, medications and concerns. If you have access to your health records, have them handy, along with a list of your medications and supplements. Be in tune with your body and be ready to discuss any signs or symptoms you find concerning; especially, any physical changes or pain you are experiencing.



Scheduling the visit is not only an important resolution but one that can be life-saving. By focusing on health information provided during the check-up, you have a great guide for being successful with your resolutions.

The important tests and screenings you need are usually determined based on age, gender and family history. Your physician will recommend which screenings are needed to assess your overall health and to rule out any life-threatening conditions. Prostate, breast, and colon screenings are all important and taken in to consideration.

Based on the exam and screening results, you will know what next steps to take and if interventional care is needed. Prepare mentally to ask questions and be ready to make small lifestyle changes. For example, a diabetes diagnosis might mean a diet plan in the new year that changes your relationship to sugar and carbohydrates or adding a new medication to your daily regimen to

help control the disease.

Ask your physician for the results of your exam, and when a follow-up visit is needed. Both are important in treating and monitoring conditions and tracking resolution milestones. Ask, Ask, Ask! Don’t be afraid to inquire about recommendations on attainable goals for creating a new you.

Scheduling the visit is not only an important resolution but one that can be life-saving. By focusing on health information provided during the check-up, you have a great guide for being successful with your resolutions. Resolving to eat better, exercise, or live a stress-free life have real benefit and make sense for your individual improvement. Resolving to make health and wellness a priority is worth celebrating daily, not just in the new year.

JOSEPH TYNES, M.D., IS AN INTERNAL MEDICINE PHYSICIAN PRACTICING IN THE SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER AREA. HE NOW SERVES THE BOSSIER CITY COMMUNITY AT CHRISTUS INTERNAL MEDICINE - NORTH BOSSIER ON BEENE BOULEVARD. RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF LOUISIANA’S TOP DOCTORS, DR. TYNES IS DEDICATED HAS MADE IT HIS MISSION TO HELP PATIENTS HEAL PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.



NEW YEAR, BETTER YOU

Local business leader partners to create course designed to help others find their purpose in business and life

“During the past two years, a lot of people have been searching for a new purpose as a result of market shifts during the pandemic, and I saw folks who did not know how to pursue that purpose. That’s why my partners and I decided to take our decades of knowledge to produce something that would give practical advice on how to pursue that purpose,” David Specht said about his new course that provides specific, actionable steps for anyone at any stage of their career or life’s journey.

The business owner and leadership guru [Ed’s Note: David Specht is publisher of BIZ. And owner of Specht Newspapers, Inc. which owns BIZ.] has partnered with entrepreneurs Tom Hammel and Dave Ross to develop Step Into Purpose.

Their 12-step course covers everything from goals and dreams to health and finances in modules that feature a short lesson, coupled with a worksheet that helps the participant put the lesson into action.

While Tom and Dave are primarily from the church/ministry world, David comes from the business world. However, the trio discovered they have a ton of knowledge in the areas of purpose and leadership.

“Each of us developed strengths in various areas, often by trial and error. Seeing this gap between knowledge and execution, the three of us decided to work together to help others where we wish we could have been helped over the years,” David explained.

David notes that people often have a host of talents they don’t monetize. And, while Step Into Purpose is not a “making money” course, it carries participants on a path to where they can see how their talents fit their purpose, and then how that purpose can become their vocation.

David adds that the pandemic proved there is no such thing as, “Business as usual.” Step Into Purpose helps business people work on often-ignored areas in personal development.

“Many people fail to realize the effect things like health, financial literacy, and self-leadership have on the bottom line,” he pointed out. “We want them to have the ability, energy, and drive to pivot as often as necessary to succeed.”

While the world keeps changing at an accelerated rate, David has experience as a business leader and grappling with the difficulty of understanding how to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. That’s

See, **PURPOSE** Page 8



“ Each of us developed strengths in various areas, often by trial and error. Seeing this gap between knowledge and execution, the three of us decided to work together to help others learn what we wish we could have known over the years.



COMING SOON

Old Dogs New Tricks 2.0

There is much more coming from David Specht in 2022. He will be releasing his book, "Old Dogs, New Tricks 2.0" which is aimed at leaders who may have been thrust into the role, or who want to improve their leadership skills.



where Step Into Purpose helps leaders with their mindset, vision, and planning.

“Step Into Purpose will bring clarity of focus on what really matters, while helping that business leader hone his or her skills in areas that aren't necessarily taught in business books,” he said.

Not a leader by choice, David says he keeps finding himself in that type of position. However, when his father died in 2010, he was suddenly in charge of a business with no safety net. He knew he had to become a better leader, which led to David pursuing books, podcasts, and conferences to absorb leadership and personal development lessons.

Except, he realized that many around him didn't see things the way he did.

“I wanted to help whoever would receive it. Over the past 10 years, I've embraced that purpose more and more,” David revealed. “What I have found is that helping others find and step into



their purpose helps me become a better leader and business person in my own right.”

“It really is a win-win scenario,” he concludes.

While David believes in the course’s ability to help anyone achieve the goal of finding what he or she was meant to do in life, he is quick to note that Step Into Purpose is a guide that provides key elements necessary for attaining the goal.

“Like any good story, there is a hero, a villain, and a guide. The hero, you, usually accomplishes a great deed while the villain, a life without purpose, stands in the way of the hero’s goal. And, the guide provides advice and support to the hero while the journey unfolds,” David summed up.

He adds that if the participant goes through Step Into Purpose, and implements the lessons, building on each one as they enter the next, then the end result will be someone who is well-prepared to achieve a life of purpose.

“Make no mistake, it is up to the hero to do the work — not the guide.”

To learn more, and to become a participant, visit ourcultivatedlives.com/stepintopurpose.

— BIZ. MAGAZINE

MORE RESOURCES

It is well documented that establishing new habits, or breaking old ones, is greatly improved with support of a community. Step Into Purpose has established a private Facebook group where participants can engage with David, Tom, and Dave to ask questions, seek support, and celebrate wins. Also, multiple events, both live and virtual, are planned in order to build on the momentum created by Step Into Purpose.

Another resource is Tom Hammel’s best-seller, “The Life You’re Meant to Lead.” In it, he outlines and explains the role of self-leadership in awakening and cultivating purpose.

Others can follow us via our podcasts, The Cultivation Podcast, and Two Per-Specht-ives Podcast. There are also resources at ourcultivatedlives.com and davidaspecht.com.

Don't stop shopping local just because the holidays are over



JOHNSON

The holidays are over and the last thing you want to think about is shopping and reading another #ShopSmall or #ShopLocal column. But I'm going to give you one any-one.

As we start our year, the economic impact of utilizing local companies when we make business decisions has a much greater reach than shopping local for the presents you are buying for friends and family for a month or two out of the year. Every month – or perhaps every week – your business is writing checks for services or supplies that your business relies on to function. These are needs and necessities – but who are you giving your money to?

Our members represent a wide swath of business and industry – financial services, legal services, insurance, suppliers, sign makers, printers, and the list goes on.

Do me a favor this year. Look over the list of vendors you are using and see how many are out of town entities. Can you switch one to a local vendor this year?

Maybe you have always used someone out of town for a certain service. We understand relationships are important. But if you have something new come up, could you try out a new vendor who is local?

Have we ever ordered pens, folders or labels from Office Depot? Sure we have.

But each year we look over our vendors for different items or services and work hard to use our local entities as much as possible.

Here's why it matters.

Every time you utilize an outside vendor for a service for this community, you are leaking out dollars from our economy. But if you choose to use a local vendor, we can keep those dollars here. Well, of course, I know you know all of that. But what you may not be thinking about is the ripple effect. If we use more local engineers and lawyers instead of

out of town firms, for instance, then those local professionals would have a need to grow their business, attracting more skilled professionals to work here in our area. That means more jobs. That also means, there's an ecosystem of work for our high schoolers to come back to after college.

Our state is not gaining as much population as many others in the South. And North Louisiana isn't growing hardly at all. But South Louisiana is.

We have to stick together and support one another in our corner of the state. The more we do these smaller things like utilizing local services, the more these small steps build a region of economic growth. And when we build ourselves up with more professional services, jobs and economic growth, our influence and our voice gets stronger, too.

LISA JOHNSON IS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE BOSSIER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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UNITED



BIA ENERGY OPERATING COMPANY EVALUATING PLANS FOR \$550M PLANT AT PORT OF CADDO-BOSSIER

Bia Energy Operating Company announced that it is evaluating a \$550 million blue methanol production plant that would be located at the Port of Caddo-Bossier. If the plant becomes operational, the company would create 75 direct new jobs, with an average annual salary of \$80,000, plus benefits. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project would result in 390 indirect jobs, for a total of 465 new jobs in Louisiana's Northwest region. Nearly 350 construction jobs would be created at peak construction for the project.

Plans for the proposed plant include a production capability of 530,000 metric tons of methanol annually, using natural gas as a feedstock. The plant would feature carbon capture capabilities, reducing carbon dioxide, or CO₂, emissions by more than 90 percent compared to other methanol plants.

If it moves forward, BEOC plans to locate its facility on a 74-acre site located at the Port of Caddo-Bossier. The company is expected to make a final decision in the 1st quarter of 2022, with construction expected to last approximately two years, and commercial operations to begin soon after.

"BRF and its partners have been working on this project for three years," said BRF President and CEO and Bia Energy Board Member John F. George Jr., M.D. "Financial analysts in BRF's Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program (EAP) helped BEOC secure investment funds from the New Louisiana Angel Fund and BRF. This initial funding was important to moving the project through the front-end engineering and environmental permitting phase."

LED began formal project discussions with BEOC in 2018. To secure the methanol plant at the Port of Caddo-Bossier, the State of Louisiana offered a competitive incentive package – subject to a final investment decision – that includes the comprehensive solutions of LED FastStart, the nation's No. 1 state workforce development program for the past 12 years. The package also includes a performance-based award of up to \$2 million for project development and infrastructure. The company also is expected to utilize the state's Quality Jobs program.

"We are excited about the project and the potential it has to make a positive economic impact on the area," BEOC executive Ana Rodriguez said. "Over the next few months we will be working to finalize the agreements and secure the financing necessary to move the project forward."



▲ *Rendering of proposed YMCA facility in north Bossier. (Courtesy of YMCA of NWLA)*

Bossier City hears YMCA proposal

The City of Bossier City is investigating whether to fund a new multi-million dollar fitness facility in north Bossier.

The council heard a proposal from the YMCA of Northwest Louisiana on Dec. 7 for a new \$35-40 million building in north Bossier.

However, there's some debate over whether the funds needed to do this should involve tax payer money or not.

The proposal, by YMCA of Northwest Louisiana CEO Gary Lash, is that Bossier City would pay to build and then own the YMCA while the YMCA of NWLA would operate it.

The Bossier Parish Republican Executive Committee released a statement opposing the project, saying Bossier City residents' tax dollars should not pay for the facility.

Some of the city's councilmen told local media that they support building the facility, but not using taxpayer money.

Officials hope the YMCA will be able to raise enough money on their own. Lash says if they don't receive money from the city, he says finding funding would be difficult.

"We pay for everything. we buy all the equipment," said Gary Lash, CEO of the YMCA of NWLA told KSLA. "We hire all the people. There is no operational or maintenance cost that goes into the facility after it is built."

The council heard the presentation but took no action. There is no agenda item for the council to approve funding for the facility, as of press time.

If the council does approve the

facility or funding is secured, it will take approximately 12-18 months to construct the new facility. The YMCA of Northwest Louisiana estimates more than 150 jobs will be created at the YMCA in Bossier City.

In the proposal, the new Bossier City YMCA will be 65,000 Square feet and contain a 50-meter Pool, Family Pool, Basketball Gym, Exercise Studios, Indoor Walking Track, Cardio and Strength Equipment, Conference Room and Child Watch. Bossier Parks and Recreation will have access to utilize the YMCA for its youth sports programs including basketball and volleyball.

An emailed press release from the YMCA cites the growth of north Bossier City as a reason for the new facility and says its quality of life and economy would be boosted with the new facility. The release goes on to state there will be a \$6-7M per year economic impact

"The Y will create jobs and draw countless families over numerous weekends, due to swim meets and other sports tournaments, to eat in Bossier City restaurants, shop in Bossier City shops and stay in Bossier City hotels. Even if Bossier City were only looking at the Y from the standpoint of a return on investment, building a new Y in north Bossier would be an astute and sound business decision," the release said.

The release cites a March poll

that named Shreveport-Bossier the fifth most obese metro area in the country.

"We have to address this problem. Otherwise, long-term, we are going to face great difficulty recruiting people to come here and finding ways to retain them if they decide to come. It is from a quality of life perspective, in which Bossier City needs to evaluate building a Y in North Bossier," the release said.

The YMCA proposed the following quality of life enhancements:

- A water safety program for every Bossier Parish second grader
- Child watch that allows parents to leave their kids in a safe and monitored environment while they can take a group exercise class or work out
- Summer Camps that will keep your kids active and get them outdoors
- Programs and events for those with special needs
- Countless wellness programming for kids, teens and adults
- Numerous events that build community and bring people together

"Bossier City has been discussing the prospect of building a Y in the city for many years. Now is the time to move forward," said the release. "The city needs to capitalize on the incredible momentum and wonderful staff that the YMCA of Northwest Louisiana has been able to create with the addition of the BHP Y and bring this quality of life to its citizens. It is additions like a Y in Bossier City that ultimately will determine whether Bossier City is great for generations to come."

— BIZ. MAGAZINE



Lash

INSURANCE ▼

Changing the insurance game in the SBC

Mark Squire worked for large insurance corporations for 17 years and he wasn't impressed.

"You know, over the years, I've realized a lot of things that I didn't like about them, and I wanted to end up doing my own thing with doing insurance the right way; educating people the right way," he said.

That is why he chose to start his own insurance company- Squire Agency.

"We're an independent agency. We've partnered with a lot of different insurance companies out there that we feel are the best of the best in any particular given area," Squire said.

Squire said he started his agency in February 2020, "about a month before the world shut down with COVID."

"It's been such an amazing journey. It's been a lot of new things, finding ways to try to navigate talking to people about what we do with Zoom calls and things, but it's been a pleasant experience for not only us, but our clients," he said. "They appreciate what we are doing, so it's been a lot of fun and we're looking forward to taking off even more."

Richard Wheeler, the Squire Agency sales manager, like Squire, worked for other insurance agencies and "did not like what they represented."

"Not from a company standpoint, but as far as how they dealt with people. I'm more of an educator, and I just didn't feel like that matched my heart for what I was doing," he said.

During the pandemic, Wheeler said he reevaluated everything.

"Why am I doing this? Do I even want to still do this? I was just kind of hating life at the time," he said. That is when he decided to post his resume, and he received a call from Squire who told him "don't give up on everything. Just come talk to me."

Wheeler did just that, and he liked what he heard.

"He was telling me about what is represented through his agency, and the way it works for individuals, the way that you're able to not just sell someone, but educate them... it just really rang true with me," he said. "And so I went home and I told my wife 'I'm going to give this guy a shot' and I've been with him ever since."

Wheeler said that Squire Agency has had its ups and downs, like most small businesses the last year, but they have found the right tools to help the business succeed- and they have the motivation.

"We really believe that what we're doing is helping people. I want to be different than what's out there. I want to be there for people, and so those are the founding principles that we have with the Squire Agency," Wheeler said.

Squire said the process to become an insurance agent is "actually very simple." A prospective agent takes a pre-licensing course online, which usually "takes people a week or less to get through. Then they typically study for about another week, and then they take a final exam within the course," he said. "When they pass that, they have to go take a state exam at the testing facility."

After they pass that, the agent does a state background check and they're usually licensed a week later. Squire said. This is the same process for all



agents, no matter what agency they work for.

"As far as the course goes, it's a pretty straightforward process, but you never stop learning. That's the key here. You never stop learning," he said.

Racheal Lindley is one of the newest members of the team. She recently obtained her insurance license.

"I have to agree about the licensing process. It was very straightforward. The course was super easy to navigate. It was informative and very in depth," she said.

Before joining the Squire Agency, Lindley was a business owner.

"I've been in a lot of network marketing prior to this, but I just hadn't found anything that really coincided with my core beliefs. And so, hearing about this kind of insurance agency, and what they stand for, I was like 'Wow, I really do want to make a difference. I want to change the lives of those around me and make waves.' So I couldn't believe what kind of opportunity I was being presented with."

One of the main hurdles that the agency has encountered, Squire said, was "people that have had bad experiences with other similar insurance companies."

"They're very standoffish and they don't even want to talk to us. So one of the biggest hurdles, I guess, is actually getting people to have an open mind to even listen to us," Squire said. "When they do, they realize how much different we are and they appreciate it."

Wheeler agreed.

"It'd be like someone who's been in a bad relationship and they're guarded and protected, and, I guess, just trying to get past those barriers. But once you do, it totally changes the experience with the person," he said.

Wheeler said one of the biggest problems with the insurance industry is that there's never really been an educational process for the client.

"Most people don't know what they have, they don't know what's in it, they don't know what it can even do. They just know that they're paying for something," he said. "So, what we bring to this area is a fresh approach. We are both men of our word. I'm going to spend as much time with you as you need to get the full understanding of what it is. We will be there for you when you need us."

The second biggest hurdle was having the right people and tools in place to succeed, which was made harder by COVID.

"Back in February, we had so many things lined up, a lot of big deals, and everything just stopped. Everything was at a standstill, and now, all of a sudden, people weren't having staff meetings anymore because of COVID, and that's where we do a lot of our education," Squire said. "So we did try to transition, and we did it somewhat successfully into Zoom meetings and things like that, but some people just didn't understand how to do

It. So that was quite a bit of an adjustment."

Squire said that his goal for Squire Agency is to expand to other cities, but to remain small within communities.

"We want to make sure that our entire process is done the right way, the way that we want it to, as far as education, as far as the proper customer service, as far as being there for people. If we get too big, and we have 20-30 agents in the Shreveport-Bossier area, it's

kind of tough to monitor what's really going on and making sure that we don't become another one of those big corporate-type places, which aren't doing the job properly," he said.

But even within a small business, there is room for growth and plenty of room for hopes and dreams.

"I'm looking forward to just becoming a bigger part of the community, which is why we partnered with the Chamber of Commerce," Squire said. "We're going to set up events where people can come in and we can educate them... Just building a brand within our community and having an agency who does these types of things that they can rely on, that they can trust, that they can really have a resource to get the proper coverage and the proper education in a non-traditional way."

Squire said his biggest goal is to make Squire Agency "a longevity agency" that will be around for decades to serve the people it has come to see as family.

"I certainly don't want to do anything else. I love what I do. The biggest thing with our agency is transparency, honesty and trust- and family," he said.

— BIZ. MAGAZINE



OCHSNER LSU HEALTH
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NOW OPEN

Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport announces the opening of Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport – Spring Lake, located at 8445 Line Avenue, Suite 100. The new location provides primary care services to patients of all ages. It also offers lifestyle management services, full laboratory, and x-ray services.

The Spring Lake Primary Care location will offer curbside arrival, patient check-in kiosks for convenient registration, virtual visits, and digital medicine. Patients will have access to the MyChart application and can schedule appointments, manage prescriptions, view lab and test results, communicate with their care team, complete virtual visits and e-precheck. The state-of-the-art facility advanced technology also includes the area's most advanced electronic health record system, providing continuity of care and convenience for patients.

Ochsner LSU Health – Spring Lake patient care team includes Dr. Natalie Trujillo-Aguirre, Dr. John Jacob and physician assistant Casey Payne.

DR. G.E. GHALI JOINS WILLIS-KNIGHTON

Willis-Knighton Health System announced that renowned oral and maxillofacial surgeon, G.E. Ghali, DDS, MD, FACS, FRCS(Ed), has joined the Willis-Knighton Physician Network and will continue seeing patients and performing oral and maxillofacial surgical procedures at Willis-Knighton's South, North, Pierremont and Bossier hospitals.

"The health system is fortunate to welcome a physician with such a distinguished career in medicine, dentistry and leadership," said Jaf Fielder, president and CEO of Willis-Knighton Health System. "Dr. Ghali was being recruited by other health systems and academic institutions throughout the country, so we worked hard to keep him here as a resource for our community. His commitment to innovation and humanity as a surgeon, makes him a great fit with the Willis-Knighton philosophy and team. As we expand medical training, we know his insight will also enhance training opportunities for the next generation of doctors. We are grateful that he chose to remain in Shreveport where he will help Willis-Knighton continue to improve healthcare for the people in this region."



Dr. Ghali came to Shreveport to attend medical school after earning his undergraduate degree at Dallas Baptist University and completing dental school at Baylor College of Dentistry. He received his medical degree here in Shreveport in 1994. Following a four-year residency in oral and maxillofacial surgery at Parkland Hospital/UTSWMC, Dr. Ghali completed a one-year head and neck surgery fellowship at Emanuel Hospital in Portland, Oregon. He rose through the ranks of the Departments of Surgery and Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery. He was named chair of the newly created Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in 2004. In 2016, he was appointed chancellor of LSU Health Shreveport and dean of the LSU School of Medicine – Shreveport.

Dr. Ghali said, "My family and I are

thrilled that an opportunity has arisen for us to remain in Shreveport to continue serving the citizens of our region, as well as continuing to mentor students, residents, and fellows. My wife Hope and I are happy to be able to continue to raise our son and three daughters here in the Shreveport-Bossier community."

Nationally, Dr. Ghali has been involved in leadership positions within the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, American Dental Association, American College of Surgeons and has served as an editor and editorial board member for six academic journals.

ATTORNEY MALCOLM
MURCHISON NAMED CHAIRMAN
OF CABL

The Council for A Better Louisiana (CABL) has named Shreveport attorney Malcolm Murchison as Chair of the organization for 2022. He will serve on CABL's Board of Directors along with a slate of officers from across the state, steering the organization in its 60th year of service to Louisiana.



"I am honored to serve as chair of CABL as we continue to pursue its mission to improve the quality of life for all Louisianians," he said. "Our focus remains consistent in the areas of education, state fiscal policies and reform, and civic engagement. I look forward to CABL's continued collaborative, nonpartisan efforts with the Committee of 100, PAR and the Louisiana legislature in the pursuit

of transformative policy changes for the betterment of our state."

Murchison is a founding member of the law firm Bradley Murchison Kelly & Shea, LLC with offices in Shreveport, Baton Rouge and New Orleans. He has been regularly named to the list of Best Lawyers in America since 2010 and been recognized many times for his work in the fields of real estate, energy, and natural resources.

DR. ROZEMAN RECEIVES CABL
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

CABL has named Dr. Phillip Rozeman of Shreveport the 2021 recipient of the organization's Robert B. Hamm Award for Distinguished Public Service.

Named in honor of the late CABL Board Chair Bob Hamm of Shreveport, the award recognizes individuals associated with CABL for their commitment to public service at the state or community level.



Rozeman is a former CABL Board Member and alum of CABL's Leadership Louisiana program. He was recognized for his work to improve educational opportunities for students across Louisiana. "For many years, Phillip has been a tireless advocate for policies that improve public education," said Barry Erwin, CABL President. "His work at both the state and local level has brought people together and made a difference in the lives of countless students across our state."

LSUS FINANCE PROGRAM NO. 1
IN LA, NO. 15 NATIONALLY FOR
REAL ESTATE CONCENTRATION

LSU Shreveport's Bachelor of Science in Finance has been ranked first in Louisiana and 15th nationally for its Real Estate concentration. The ranking comes from Bachelors Degree Center who recently published its Best Online Bachelor's in Real Estate listing for 2022.

"We are pleased to have received this recognition and are proud to be an integral part of the Economics and Finance Department in the College of Business," said Dr. Douglas Bible, Professor and Department Chair for Economics and Finance. We feel our courses and professors are excellent and that the Real Estate Curriculum is one of the best in the country."



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