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# Hispanic Entrepreneurship at the Forefront of the American Business Boom

SEPTEMBER 19TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Hispanic Entrepreneurship at the Forefront of the American Business Boom

## Hispanic entrepreneurship at the forefront of the American business boom

By Mindy Brissey, U.S. Small Business Administration Regional Administrator

Each year from Sept. 15 – Oct. 15, Americans celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month as a time to recognize the many contributions, diverse cultures, and extensive histories of the Hispanic communities in the United States. The American dream of small business ownership is embraced by people of all cultures and heritages.

As a Hispanic small business owner myself, I can attest to the challenges faced by small businesses. In my role, I am devoted to ensuring that small business owners and entrepreneurs have the tools they need to succeed. I have come across many entrepreneurs whose journeys reflect my own. The Hispanic community is one of the most entrepreneurial spirited groups in the nation. It lives in the dreams of those who have only just arrived here and in the legacy of families who have been here for centuries.

The Biden-Harris administration and [U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman](#) are committed to the success of Hispanic communities. More Hispanic individuals than ever before are seizing the opportunity to create new businesses which improve their cities and neighborhoods. Data shows that five million Hispanic-owned businesses contribute \$800 billion each year to our economy. In the past decade, Hispanic entrepreneur growth rates have risen 10 times faster than non-Hispanic business rates. SBA Administrator Guzman, the highest-ranking Hispanic woman in the President's Cabinet, has made strengthening our Hispanic-owned small businesses a priority. Over the last 44 months we have seen the fastest creation rate of Hispanic-owned businesses in over a decade, which was more than 20 percent faster than pre-pandemic levels. The Biden-Harris administration has also made a goal of increasing by 50 percent the amount of federal contracting dollars going to small, disadvantaged businesses by 2025—which would translate to an additional \$100 billion for minority-owned and other underserved businesses.

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SBA is committed to empowering Hispanic businesses as they continue to break down barriers and achieve success in business. As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, let us not only recognize the contributions of Hispanic entrepreneurs but also uplift the next generation of business leaders and build a prosperous business landscape for all.

For more information about SBA’s programs and services visit [www.sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov). To stay up to date on SBA news and upcoming events, follow us on social media.

SBA Great Plains Region X/Twitter: @SBAGreatplains LinkedIn: @SBAGreatplainsregion

Mindy Brissey is the SBA Regional Administrator overseeing the agency’s programs, offices, and operations in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska.

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## SEMO Food Bank, Feeding America Call on Public

# to Join Movement to End Hunger

AUGUST 27TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## SEMO Food Bank, Feeding America Call on Public to Join Movement to End Hunger

### SEMO Food Bank, Feeding America Call on Public to Join Movement to End Hunger

SIKESTON, Mo. (Aug. 26, 2024) – September is Hunger Action Month and Feeding America is encouraging one million actions across the country to end hunger. During the month-long campaign, Southeast Missouri Food Bank will be raising awareness and inspiring action in its 16-county service area. Every action counts, whether it's donating, advocating, volunteering or spreading the word online.

“We can end hunger in the U.S. when we decide to work together with coordinated action and a shared belief that everyone deserves fresh, nutritious food,” said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America. “This year during Hunger Action Month, we are encouraging everyone to take action. Raise your voice. Volunteer. Donate. Our individual actions may seem small, but together they become a powerful movement that can change history.”

The USDA estimates 1 in 7 people and 1 in 5 children experienced food insecurity in 2022. Those numbers are even higher in southeast Missouri, with 1 in 6 households facing hunger. The region has some of the highest rates of hunger in the state – as high as 35.5 percent for childhood hunger in Pemiscot County. SEMO Food Bank serves seven of the 10 most food insecure counties in Missouri.

“We know thousands of our neighbors across southeast Missouri are facing hunger, and the difficult choices that brings,” said Joey Keys, CEO of SEMO Food Bank. “Hunger Action Month is an opportunity for us, and the Feeding America network, to really shine a spotlight on hunger in our nation. We hope people will take the opportunity to learn more about this issue that affects so many of our neighbors and find ways they can help.”

People can get involved locally through actions like:

- **Go orange for Hunger Action Month:** Orange is the color of hunger awareness, so we encourage everyone to wear orange on Sept. 10, which is Hunger Action Day. If your business has exterior lighting, consider using orange lighting during September.

Be sure to post on social media and tag SEMO Food Bank!

- **Make a donation:** A monetary gift is an easy way to help our neighbors facing hunger. Every \$1 helps provide food for four meals. If you want to have some fun with it, create a virtual food drive and challenge family and friends to compete to raise the most. To get started, go to [semofoodbank.org](http://semofoodbank.org) and click “Get Involved.”
- **Volunteer at the food bank or a food pantry:** Spending a few hours each month volunteering can make an enormous difference to the food bank, our partners and the neighbors we serve. Sign up to volunteer in our Jackson or Sikeston locations at [semofoodbank.org/volunteer](http://semofoodbank.org/volunteer) or use our pantry locator to find one of our partners in your community.

Learn more about how you can take action by visiting [semofoodbank.org](http://semofoodbank.org) or [hungeractionmonth.org](http://hungeractionmonth.org).

### **About Feeding America**

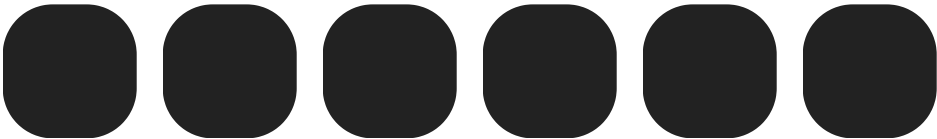
Feeding America is committed to an America where no one is hungry. We support tens of millions of people who experience food insecurity to get the food and resources they say they need to thrive as part of a nationwide network of food banks, statewide food bank associations, food pantries and meal programs. We also invest in innovative solutions to increase equitable access to nutritious food, advocate for legislation that improves food security and work to address factors that impact food security, such as health, cost of living and employment. We partner with people experiencing food insecurity, policymakers, organizations, and supporters, united with them in a movement to end hunger. Visit [www.FeedingAmerica.org](http://www.FeedingAmerica.org) to learn more.

### **About Southeast Missouri Food Bank**

The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build healthy communities. The food bank provides food to 140 charitable and disaster relief programs in Southeast Missouri. These member agencies include food pantries, soup kitchens, domestic violence and homeless shelters. Southeast Missouri Food Bank also holds regular mobile food distributions and provides monthly boxes of food to 5,575 senior citizens and weekend backpacks of food during the school year to 1,200 students in area school districts. The food bank’s 16-county coverage area includes Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard and Wayne counties. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or scheduling a time to volunteer. Visit [semofoodbank.org](http://semofoodbank.org) for more information.

<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/vjti/SEMO-Food-Bank-Feeding-America-Call-on-Public--to-Join-Movement-to-End-Hunger>

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# Age Spots: How Artificial is the Intelligence? By Jackie Dover

AUGUST 26TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Age Spots: How Artificial is the Intelligence? By Jackie Dover

## How Artificial is the Intelligence?

I am not a computer or technology expert, truth is I hate upgrading my phone or computer or learning about all the new features everything has now. Smart phones, smart cars and even smart refrigerators, sometimes everything feels like it's smarter than I am. And now, we have Artificial Intelligence (AI) that is taking over everything.

AI is computer technology that has been programmed to "learn" and understand speech, solve problems and make decisions. Does that sound scary? It does to me. However, AI has been around for quite a while and has just become more advanced with the innovation of technology. In 1996, a computer known as Deep Blue beat chess champion Garry Kasparov in a game of chess, since that time AI has improved to the extent that it can now navigate roads and we have "self-driving" cars that have features that can detect road hazards and respond accordingly.

Benefits of AI in healthcare for seniors include wearable devices that can monitor vital signs and record valuable information for your doctor. AI devices can also give seniors reminders to take their medication or keep calendar notifications. They are also used in alert devices that can call emergency services or families in case of a fall or other emergency. AI can also be used to analyze a lot of data quickly so could help in diagnosing problems and allow treatment to start earlier.

AI can also offer companionship to seniors who may not have as much access to friends or family. Having a chat-bot or virtual assistant who can answer questions, tell stories or just be a way to vent can decrease loneliness and improve mental well-being. In my home, we have an Amazon Alexa device, we switch the voice up on occasion to make it more fun but our Alexa gives us weather updates, tells us jokes and answers tons of questions that we have throughout the day. Alexa also plays music when we tell them what mood we are in, keeps shopping lists, and even makes suggestions based on previous purchases. The down side is sometimes Alexa talks to us for no reason, so that is a little creepy. Nevertheless, the benefits outweigh the risks for us, for now.

There are down sides to AI, privacy concerns being one of the most commonly mentioned. Alexa can answer my questions, because Alexa is always listening. There are steps you can take to turn off devices like Alexa but some things will record locations and activity because that is the purpose of the device. As with any interactions, you need to be cautious. Make sure you know the privacy policies and how to adjust the privacy settings on your devices. Always protect your personal information from AI or humans.

AI also has the ability to generate “false images” that include pictures, audio and video, which can be used to spread false information. I have seen some of the AI videos and some are very obviously fake but others can be shockingly real. Many artists and authors are concerned that as AI improves people will rely on artificially produced content and devalue that made by real people. Another concern is that we become too dependent on machines doing all the “thinking” and we lose our critical thinking, reasoning and problem solving skills. I’m sure we can all point to someone in our lives that seems overly reliant on their devices already and as AI develops, it could get worse.

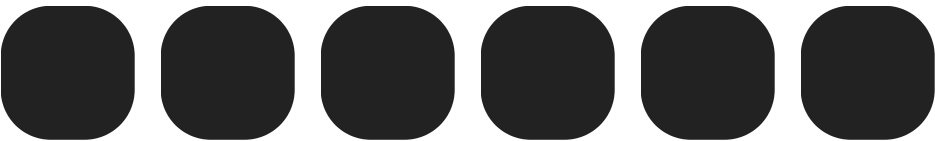
The bottom line is AI is here to stay and will continue to develop and evolve, we just have to be intelligent ourselves and make sure we keep our human connections.

If you are a senior or have questions about senior issues, please call Aging Matters 800-392-8771. Because....Aging Matters.

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Letter From Judge Brad Jarrell Regarding Last

# Week's Commission Meeting

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JULY 29TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Letter From Judge Brad Jarrell Regarding Last Week's Commission Meeting

To Whom It May Concern,

In light of the article published by the Dexter Statesman on July 23, 2024, I find it necessary to clarify some of the misunderstandings that may have been taken away from the Commissioner's meeting on Monday July 22, 2024. Most importantly, I want to ensure that everyone understands that the courtrooms at the Stoddard County Justice Center are in great shape and we use them on a daily basis.

In meeting with the Commissioners, my sole purpose was to report that the courtrooms could use new carpet. In our main courtrooms, A and B, the carpet is worn and has been unraveling at the edges. In courtroom C, which we use on a daily basis for smaller cases and hearings, there has never been carpet. This results in courtroom C having a significant echo, which is why we do not use it for cases that require a court reporter. The court reporter, also known as a stenographer, must be able to listen carefully and transcribe everything said in a court case, however the court reporter is only required in a limited number of case types.

I must also clarify that there is no mold in the courthouse. The only statement regarding that issue would have been to state that the old chairs, which were replaced over a decade ago, had to be thrown away due to them being cloth and unable to be properly cleaned. Since that time, all new chairs purchased for the courthouse have been selected in part based on their ability to be properly sanitized. We have also been improving the chairs in the courthouse by adding arms and removing rolling casters to increase ease and comfort for our visitors and jurors. The addition of new carpeting will also serve to help us in this endeavor.

I am not sure how this got so blown out of proportion, but I am grateful to the County Commission and local news organizations for their support and interest in the Stoddard County Justice Center.

Sincerely,

Bradley D. Jarrell

Associate Circuit Judge

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## Age Spots by Jackie Dover - Freedom of the Open Road

JULY 22ND 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Age Spots by Jackie Dover - Freedom of the Open Road

Age Spots

Jackie Dover

#### Freedom of the Open Road

There is nothing like hopping into your car and cruising down the road with your music blasting and the wind in your face. Driving is important to maintaining independence for all ages but especially seniors. Being safe on the road is crucial and everyone needs to take the needed precautions to be the best driver we can be.

The first thing for safety is to ensure you are in the best shape physically, staying active and getting regular check-ups to make sure there are no issue that can arise while we are in control of a vehicle should be mandatory for all drivers. Make sure you understand what medication you are taking and if there are any side effects like drowsiness that could impact alertness on the road. Getting regular vision and hearing checks is important to ensure you are able to make the needed adjustments while driving as quickly as possible.

Plan your route so you are comfortable knowing how to get to where you are going. GPS and navigation aids are great with telling you how to get to unfamiliar places, use the hands free options so you are able to keep both hands on the wheel. Planning a trip so most or all of the driving is done during daylight hours is also a great idea; visibility is better and you have more notice to make required adjustments. In addition, plan enough time that if there is bad weather, you can make other arrangements if needed. Weather conditions such as rain, fog, or snow can significantly affect driving conditions. You may need to slow down and maintain a larger distance from other vehicles. If conditions worsen, consider postponing your trip until weather conditions improve or look into other options such as public transit, ridesharing or arranging rides with friends and family. Being safe is the key.

Keeping your vehicle in good condition is important for all drivers. Maintain regular service and inspections; check tires, lights, brakes and fluid levels on a regular basis. Many newer cars will alert you to any issues and when servicing is required. Having my car tell me when it needs an oil change is super convenient and maybe a little creepy.

A very important rule for driving safety is minimizing distractions. I cannot tell you how many times I see drivers of all ages talking on their phone, head down texting or eating as I try to avoid getting in their way. Limit distractions, use the hands free and voice activated options. Try



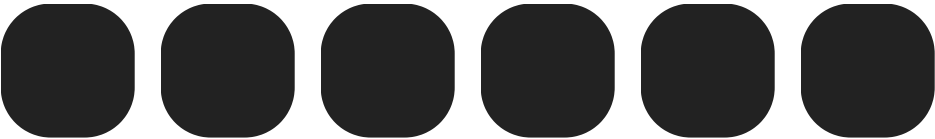
to avoid adjusting the radio or other controls while moving. Be the example for others.

The discussion on when someone should stop driving will vary for everyone. If there are physical limitations involved such as vision loss or dementia the conversation may come sooner than anyone wishes and some people will be good drivers their entire lives. There are several resources that offer refresher courses or evaluations for older drivers such as AARP, the National Institute on Aging and even your local insurance company. For or more information on this topic or any age related issues, please call Aging Matters 1-800-392-8771, because Aging Matters.

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