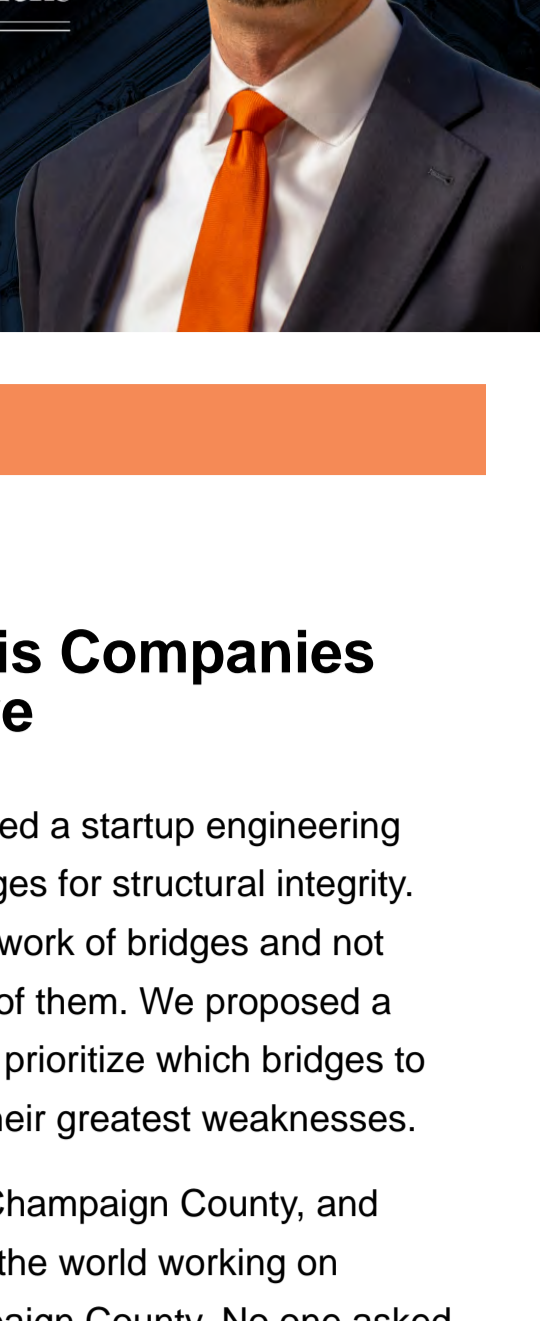




Michael W. Frerichs
ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER



Treasurer's Note

February 27, 2024

Investing in Illinois Companies and Illinois' Future

In the early 2000s, I co-founded a startup engineering company that monitored bridges for structural integrity. Our country has an aging network of bridges and not enough money to replace all of them. We proposed a technological solution to help prioritize which bridges to replace first and to pinpoint their greatest weaknesses.

We started that company in Champaign County, and although we traveled around the world working on projects, we stayed in Champaign County. No one asked us to move to Silicon Valley because our investors lived in Champaign County.

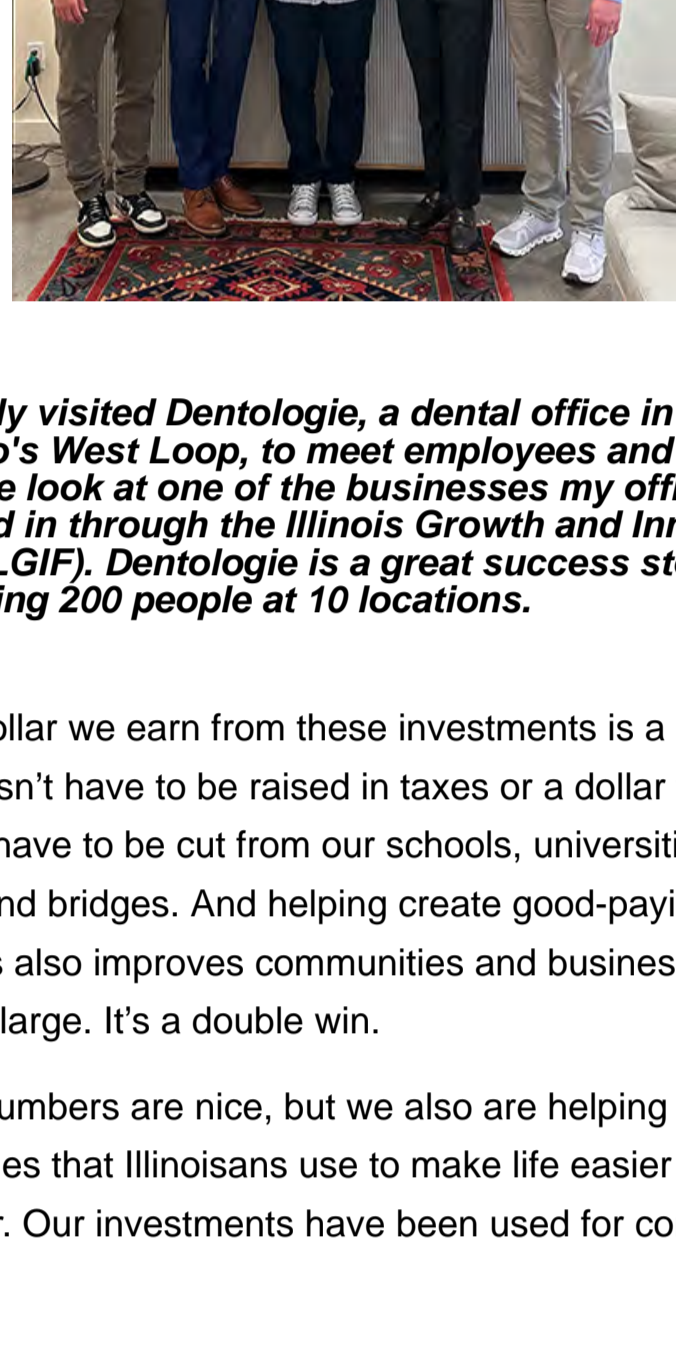
That was not frequently the case around that time. Startups like YouTube, PayPal and Netscape were founded by University of Illinois alums, but their companies didn't stay here or grow here. They frequently turned to Silicon Valley for funding, and often were told to move their companies to California.

As State Treasurer, I knew that had to change, and I have focused on investing in Illinois venture capital firms that in turn invest in and help us retain our quality startups. That effort had its roots in the Technology Development Account (TDA), which Illinois' leadership created to allow the State Treasurer to make such investments.

As a state senator, I voted to increase the amount that the State Treasurer could invest to further the impact we could have on our promising startups. No one took advantage of this authority until I took office, however. So, we created the [Illinois Growth and Innovation Fund \(ILGIF\)](#) and expanded the way we invest to ensure founders here in Illinois had ample access to funding locally.

Since 2016, we have invested more than \$650 million. We have invested in over 50 Illinois funds that have helped cultivate over \$57 billion of investment in Illinois companies.

An independent review has shown that this has resulted in over 19,000 new full-time jobs in Illinois with another 32,000 supporting jobs. When we took office, the TDA had returns in the low single digits. Today, ILGIF has returns of approximately 15%.



I recently visited Dentologic, a dental office in Chicago's West Loop, to meet employees and get an up-close look at one of the businesses my office has invested in through the Illinois Growth and Innovation Fund (ILGIF). Dentologic is a great success story, employing 200 people at 10 locations.

Every dollar we earn from these investments is a dollar that doesn't have to be raised in taxes or a dollar that doesn't have to be cut from our schools, universities, roads, and bridges. And helping create good-paying jobs in Illinois also improves communities and businesses from small to large. It's a double win.

These numbers are nice, but we also are helping companies that Illinoisans use to make life easier and healthier. Our investments have been used for companies like:

- [Farmer's Fridge](#), making it easier to find quick healthy food options in vending machines.
- [SpotHero](#), helping people find parking and save money.
- [Tock](#), helping customers and restaurants book and manage reservations, event ticketing, takeout, and delivery all from one platform.
- [LiftUp Enterprises](#), helping bridge the wealth gap and expanding employment horizons for Illinois workers through job training and upskilling.
- [Factor](#), helping people focus on health nutrition through fresh, pre-cooked meals.

I read a lot in the papers about businesses leaving our state, but every day I see enthusiastic entrepreneurs growing companies here in Illinois. I think they should get more coverage, and I intend to do more of that in this newsletter and on our social media channels.

The State Treasurer can't solve all of the problems—real and perceived—in Illinois, but that doesn't stop us from being part of the solution. We are making smart, targeted investments that are paying dividends in more dollars to our state, more jobs for our workforce, and more conveniences for our neighbors, friends, and loved ones.

I am always excited to meet people working at these companies, and I think you will be too. I hope you will enjoy reading about them in regular segments in this newsletter and watching videos that we produce as I talk with some of our more interesting entrepreneurs.

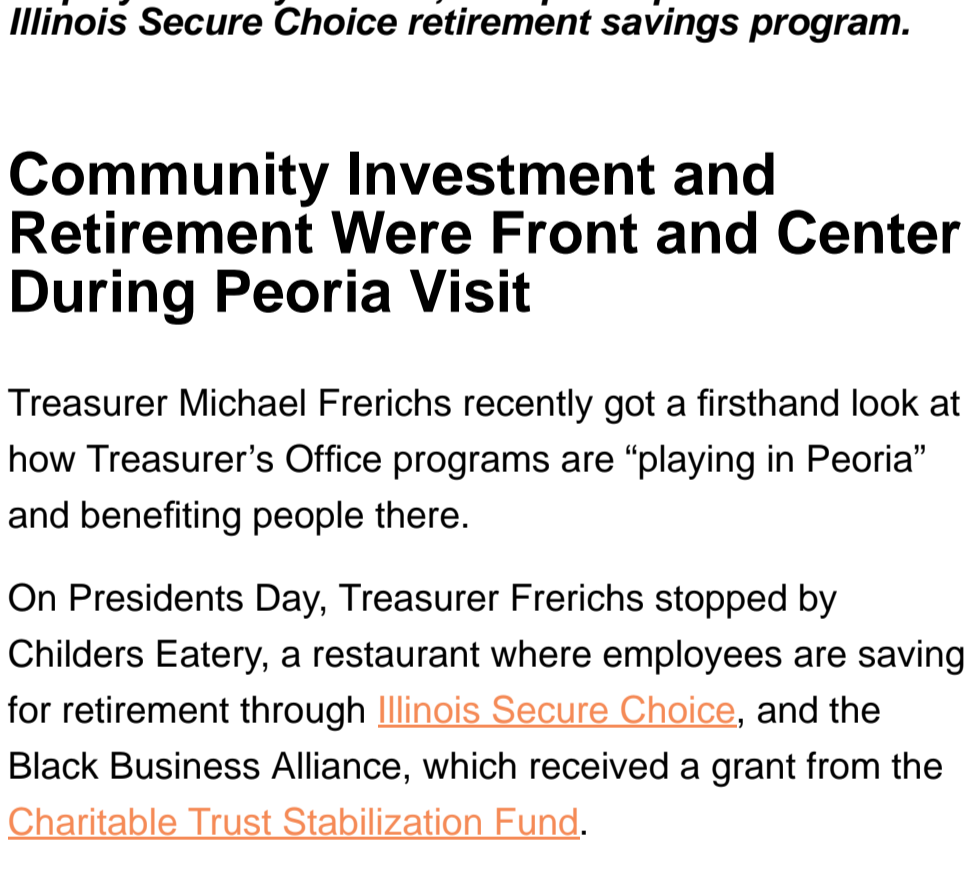
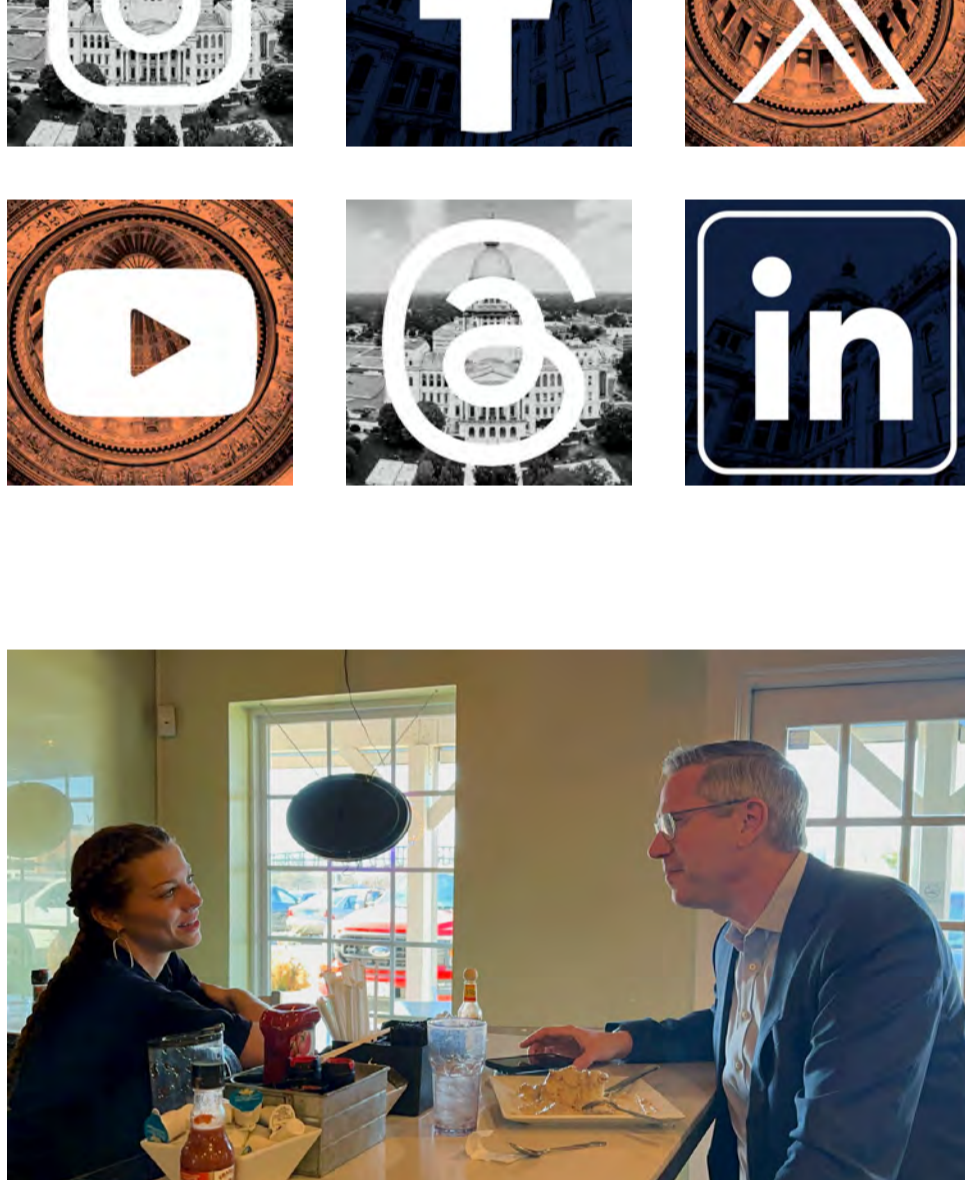
We have had some successes, but we are by no means done. I see brighter days ahead for Illinois—the true tech hub of the Midwest.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Frerichs

Illinois State Treasurer

Follow us on Social Media!

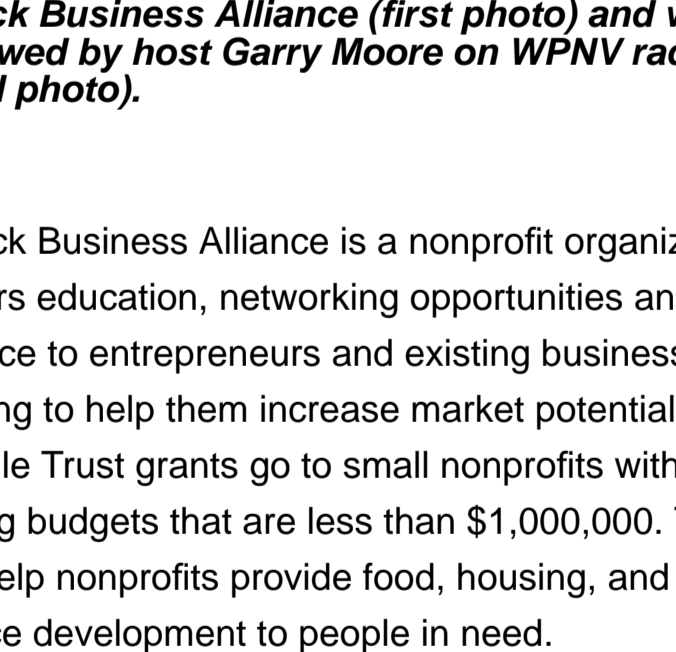


Treasurer Frerichs, at right, chats with Childers Eatery employee Karsyn Lower, who participates in the Illinois Secure Choice retirement savings program.

Community Investment and Retirement Were Front and Center During Peoria Visit

Treasurer Michael Frerichs recently got a firsthand look at how Treasurer's Office programs are "playing in Peoria" and benefiting people there.

On Presidents Day, Treasurer Frerichs stopped by Childers Eatery, a restaurant where employees are saving for retirement through [Illinois Secure Choice](#), and the Black Business Alliance, which received a grant from the [Charitable Trust Stabilization Fund](#).



Treasurer Frerichs also visited the Peoria chapter of the Black Business Alliance (first photo) and was interviewed by host Garry Moore on WPNV radio (second photo).

The Black Business Alliance is a nonprofit organization that offers education, networking opportunities and other assistance to entrepreneurs and existing businesses—the goal being to help them increase market potential. Charitable Trust grants go to small nonprofits with annual operating budgets that are less than \$1,000,000. The grants help nonprofits provide food, housing, and workforce development to people in need.

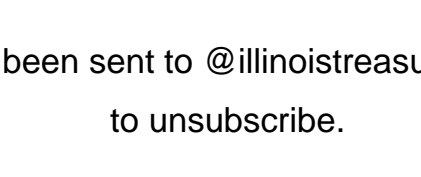
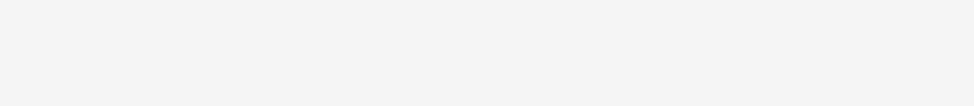
"In the Treasurer's Office we want to give people opportunity to lead a better life," Frerichs said of the Charitable Trust program. "We look for organizations to partner with to have a greater impact."

While in Peoria, Treasurer Frerichs also spoke with several local news media outlets. [Here](#) is one of those stories.

Working for You: Investment Earnings for January

Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs' office made \$129.8 million in investment earnings for the state portfolio last month.

Another \$88 million was earned for cities, school districts and other units of government that take part in the [Illinois Funds](#) local government investment pool.



Illinois State Treasurer Michael W. Frerichs

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