

Today's Flick Fact

Question: Can you name the famed Central Illinois man, a young, vigorous Democrat, who also vigorously campaigned for Democrats until reaching age 50?

Answer: Coincidentally, it was the man now remembered as perhaps America's greatest Republican, Ronald Reagan, the Eureka College graduate. Reagan was a staunch Democrat at Eureka — until the early 1960s, in fact. That's when he believed the Democratic Party had become too liberal, especially concerning economic issues. Reagan was born 111 years ago today, in Tampico in west-central Illinois.



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TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Sunday, Feb. 6, the 37th day of 2022. There are 328 days left in the year.

Today's highlight

On Feb. 6, 1952, Britain's King George VI, 56, died at Sandringham House in Norfolk, England; he was succeeded as monarch by his 25-year-old elder daughter, who became Queen Elizabeth II.

LOTTERY

SATURDAY	FRIDAY
Pick Three-Midday ■ 6-4-8, Fireball: 3	Pick Three-Evening ■ 9-6-7, Fireball: 8
Pick Four-Midday ■ 7-7-3-9, Fireball: 6	Pick Four-Evening ■ 8-0-6-3, Fireball: 6
Lucky Day Lotto Midday ■ 1-10-13-29-38	Lucky Day Lotto Evening ■ 3-28-32-34-35
Lotto Jackpot ■ \$7.55 million	Mega Millions ■ 7-16-34-44-61
Powerball Jackpot ■ \$137 million	■ Mega Ball: 24 ■ Megaplier: 4 ■ \$31 million

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The Pantagraph

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5 QUESTIONS WITH | JAMIE HUFF



PROVIDED

Jamie Huff, far left, president and chief operating officer of RoomReady, stands with other leaders of the Bloomington-based company.

RoomReady helping businesses create videoconference spaces

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Each week The Pantagraph profiles a different community member. Know someone we should talk to? Email kheather@pantagraph.com.

Name: Jamie Huff
Position: President and chief operating officer of RoomReady

1. What is Room-Ready?

RoomReady is a leading audiovisual integrator. We design and install AV solutions that are easy to buy, deploy and use because we focus on simplifying the process.

In doing so, RoomReady helps companies communicate more effectively, save on travel costs and have more efficient meetings. The pandemic shined the spotlight on the need for more effective meeting platforms, making conference calls and poor-quality video meetings no longer acceptable. Now, with a diverse set of options for both software and hardware solutions, companies come to us to choose and implement the right combination of technologies to help them achieve their goals.

2. When was Room-Ready established?

Our company was launched in 2007 as Zeller Digital Innovations. Aaron McArdle, founder and CEO, worked at Zeller Electric and purchased the low-voltage cabling portion of the business to establish Zeller Digital Innovations. Along the way, it

became clear the AV market, specifically video conferencing, was a market where the company could make a significant impact. In 2014, the RoomReady brand began as a division of Zdi. The RoomReady portion of Zdi became the focus of the entire organization in 2015.

3. RoomReady is based in Bloomington, but has branched out to major cities like New York, Portland, Oregon, and now St. Louis. How has it been able to expand so far and so quickly?

Early on, we developed a strong relationship with Cisco that was built around RoomReady expanding AV hardware and software capabilities, while making the technology easy to use. Our common-sense approach to solving problems in the simplest way possible resonated across the country and led to our rapid expansion.

One of the items helping RoomReady achieve its goals is our adoption of the Entrepreneurial Operating System. EOS is simple and practical, but it takes hard work and discipline. We used EOS to help set a vision for the company and then create traction and momentum for achieving the goals. EOS is all about simplification, focus and accountability. There are core tools and a process for running your business that help guide you to success — whether you are trying to turn around a company or maximize your growth potential.

Our customer base comprises of some of the largest companies in the world. They almost always

have a presence in the largest cities, including New York, Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles, Boston, Dallas, Atlanta and Chicago. Our locations in New York and Portland were established because we had built enough volume in those areas that we wanted full-service regional offices for those markets.

4. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your business?

Like other companies, 2020 was a challenge. Since most employees were not physically in their company offices, video-conference rooms were not a priority. We went from fully booked and on pace for a record year, to running at 10% of capacity within three weeks. Additionally, even if conference room renovations were important to our customers, they were not allowing contractors in facilities due to COVID-19 restrictions.

We saw businesses and buildings start to reopen more aggressively and consistently in the middle of 2021. Since that time, our business has not only picked back up where it left off but increased significantly. The pandemic also accelerated the adoption of video-first communications, and companies are trying to shore up their AV systems and plans as the expectations have changed.

5. What does the future of meetings look like to you?

We have been asking ourselves the same question throughout the pandemic — what will meetings look like on the other side of this? Pre-COVID, most meetings and their

participants were held in person. As we emerge from isolation, we fully expect the hybrid approach to stay. Most meetings will be heavily oriented toward hybrid participation, with roughly half of participants remote. Many meetings will be 100% virtual.

Travel has also changed. We see how it has affected our customers. With employees traveling less, they need to compensate with more video-enabled meeting spaces. It also affects us at RoomReady. Before the pandemic, our technicians were on the road 200 days a year. Travel restrictions, COVID protocols, increasing costs of travel, decreasing availability of flights and the general inconvenience have all contributed to major challenges for our customers and RoomReady.

RoomReady continues to grow. We are undergoing a major expansion of our Portland operations and expect to complete an additional acquisition in the second half of 2022. Right now, the limiting factor for RoomReady is consistent with what many companies are facing — supply chain and labor shortages. We are always looking for good people to join the RoomReady team and help us continue the success we have enjoyed.

Contact Kade Heather at 309-820-3256. Follow him on Twitter: @kadeheather

NEWSLETTER:
Sign up for our Olympics Update newsletter. Point your smartphone camera at the code and tap the link.

NEWSVU

Vehicle burns in Rivian factory

BRENDAN DENISON
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NORMAL — Town of Normal firefighters extinguished a Friday night vehicle fire inside the Rivian automotive plant.

A press release from the Normal Fire Department said crews were dispatched at 9 p.m. Friday to the electric vehicle manufacturer at 100 N. Rivian Motorway. Rivian officials directed firefighters to the northwest side of

the facility, and they found moderate smoke conditions inside, the statement said. Additionally, the fire alarm was activated and personnel were evacuated from the plant.

The release said a Rivian vehicle up on a lift was found on fire, and a sprinkler above was suppressing the flames. Firefighters connected a hose line to the standpipe system in the plant, advanced to the vehicle and put out the fire.

NFD said the Bloomington Fire Department was initially called to assist because of the size of the facility and the extended ventilation tasks. Normal Fire also called in off-duty firefighters to keep other stations staffed and ready respond to other calls.

The press release said the sprinkler system kept the fire from spreading to the structure or to nearby vehicles and equipment before crews arrived, limiting the

fire damage.

Matt Swaney, public information officer for NFD, said in the release that only one vehicle was damaged and everyone was able to exit the building safely.

Investigators are still working to learn what caused the fire.

Contact Brendan Denison at (309) 820-3238. Follow Brendan Denison on Twitter: @BrendanDenison

HOW TIME FLIES

100 years ago
Feb. 6, 1922: A full-page ad extols virtues of the 1922 Franklin. The Syracuse-made car has been around for 20 years, with models ranging in price from \$2,450 to \$3,800. The engine is air cooled, and its frame is wood rather than steel. The Franklin gets 20 miles per gallon of gas.

75 years ago
Feb. 6, 1947: About 200 seedmen, growers and staff members attended the Funk Bros. Seed Co. annual winter meeting. The news was good: The hybrid seed corn profit was twice its 1940 level. And five of the seven winners of the corn-growing contest resulted from the G-hybrid seeds.

50 years ago
Feb. 6, 1972: Local losses today include F. Russell Foster and Dr. Leon T. Fruin. Foster headed the McLean County Public Aid Department for 32 years before retiring in September 1970. Fruin was a Normal physician and president of the Illinois State Medical Society when he died.

25 years ago
Feb. 6, 1997: The Humane Society is suing the Town of Normal over a bequest from a resident. The suit alleges she died leaving money to build a animal shelter with matching funds from the town, and that the town violated the provision. Mayor Karraker says it's up to the courts to decide.