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The good economic news

Wil Cashen. That's the name we all know now. Cashen is the president of Electric Motors Co., which is working to create an electric vehicle industry in the Wakarusa and Nappanee areas.

If Cashen and his partners are successful, his industry will transform the industrial base of Elkhart County. Cashen talks about his venture in this issue.



Also, writer John Kline spent time at LaCasa, a social service agency that is working to improve Goshen. The agency has had good success in helping improve the housing in Goshen. It is vital for a community to provide decent homes for its residents. By doing so living conditions are improved and neighborhoods look better

and give a visual sense of success and vitality. These are conditions that are required to attract new businesses to a community and instill a sense of pride in the city.

In Elkhart, there is a success story. Vogue Beauty College has moved to a new location that provides a modern educational facility to train cosmetologists. This is a popular vocation in Elkhart County and offers people a chance to start their own business in their home or in a small storefront.

The faculty at Vogue are experienced and professional in their approach to providing this education.

These are all positive stories that we are presenting and I hope you will enjoy reading them.

— Roger Schneider, editor

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The man who brings HOPE

Denise Fedorow

Writer

The manufacturers and labor force in Elkhart County have done a lot of things right in the past, according to Wil Cashen, chief executive officer of Electric Motor Corp., and he wants to help them take those past successes into the future.

Cashen announced in May that the Electric Motor Corp. will open a manufacturing plant and industrial complex in Wakarusa and Nappanee to produce electric-drive systems for trucks, buses and motorhomes.

“We can become the biggest manufacturer of trucks, busses and RVs in the world — why wouldn’t I want to be a part of that?” he asked.

When one speaks to Cashen, it becomes very clear that he is passionate about making a positive difference for the people of this area, and he has the vision of a man who’s lived and worked around the world and sees the value the Wakarusa and Nappanee communities have to offer.

Cashen’s parents are from the Mishawaka and South Bend areas, but Cashen was born in Hawaii in June 1952 while his father was in the Marine Corps. The family moved back to Mishawaka when Cashen was 3.

He has a younger brother who works for him. Cashen attended Penn High School, where he said he barely made it through to graduation. He was in the



fourth graduating class from Penn.

“I was into rock ‘n’ roll, math and design. I didn’t fit anywhere,” he said.

He credits two of his teachers, his drama teacher and his industrial arts teacher, for helping him in the work he does today.

“They were my shining stars,” he said.

Cashen said the drama teacher’s influence helped him to make verbal presentations, while the freedom the industrial arts teacher allowed students helped him find his niche.

“Everyone was designing houses in industrial arts and my teacher said, ‘Wil, I know you don’t like to do this but you’re a natural designer, so design what you want and I’ll grade you on that,’” Cashen said.

Those two years of freedom helped him to understand applied math, which helped him to understand physics and engineering.

After high school, he was in school at Notre Dame when his draft number came up and he went into the service. He was saved from being sent to a high risk squadron in Vietnam by his commanding officer. The officer had a Porsche and Cashen had a passion for working on Porsches, so they developed what he described as a sort of father-son relationship. When the officer tore up his orders, Cashen said, “I was mad — I thought I was a mighty warrior in my mind.”

Instead he was sent to Mexico and after getting out of the service he moved his young family to Germany, where he went back to school learning more about Porsches. “At the time there were only about 100 mechanics for Porsche.”

After a few years in Germany, three children and a move back to the United States, he started a company building replica Porsche 550 Spiders in 1977.

“I was 28 and had 14 people working for me. I didn’t know what I was doing,” he said.

He sold the company, moved to California and attended the University of California at Santa Barbara. A move back to Detroit found him working for an engineering firm and then he built a laboratory.

“We were the only aerodynamic lab doing engineering work with car companies using electro-magnetic computer control systems,” he said.

Cashen said the electro-magnetic mechanics was the last principle of the Industrial Revolution. He explained what he called the four basic stages of that revolution:

1.) Men working on an assembly line — invented by Henry Ford.

About Electric Motors Corp.

According to the company, EMC, develops and manufactures electric power-drive systems for electric and hybrid vehicles.

The company has partnered with recreational vehicle manufacturer Gulf Stream Coach and other partners to produce a light-duty electric pickup truck.

According to EMC, the companies plan to invest in building renovations, machinery and equipment to create manufacturing facilities in Wakarusa and Nappanee.

The new electric pickup trucks will use electric power drive technology that is clean, efficient, reliable and can be fitted into current vehicle models as well as future advanced technology electric plug-in and hybrid models, according to EMC.

2.) Equipment helping the labor force.

3.) Equipment more advanced, doing some of the assembly.

4.) Micro-computers — the final stage of being automated.

“We built one of the first ‘dark factories’ — where you can build something in the dark — without humans, without lights,” he explained.

In the best case, there’s a partnership between humans and machines, according to Cashen, because robots can do quantity and quality work, but humans offer individuality and that, he said, brings him full circle to why he’s in Elkhart County now.

“I’m here because of the level of customization this area promotes. It’s not done anywhere else in the world,” he said.

He cited all the different RV manufacturers in the area, many of whom once worked for another company and then decided they could offer something just a little different.

“We’ve embraced individuality in the Elkhart County area — companies and individuals who are like-minded in nature but customized for special needs. That’s so powerful,” he said.

From buggies to electric motors

Cashen pointed out that history repeats itself and he said we may be returning to a time like the 12th to 15th centuries in Europe, when communities of cobblers (for example) made shoes and everyone went to that community to purchase shoes.

He said Detroit was similar with the “Big Three” car companies. But he said Detroit’s mistake was not celebrating individuality.

He said there was a time when everyone was manufacturing buggies, and when drive systems came out they became horseless carriages and many manufacturers couldn’t make that

transition.

“Studebaker was one of the only buggy companies that lived through the transition from buggy to auto company. Everyone else began as a car company. What we’re seeing is the same thing happening again.”

Because of rising fuel costs, tides are turning against gasoline engines and while reducing greenhouse gasses is great, Cashen said the reality is “We can’t afford to have a flat economy.”

“The Electric Motor Corp. is being developed totally to build drive systems — everything else is already here,” he said.

The long range plan is to build an industrial complex in the Wa-Nee area, engaging local manufacturers. Cashen is already working on bringing other people to the area, creating a more vertical manufacturing process.

“Becoming more vertical while still maintaining individuality — if we do that, the market area wins. We’re in a sweet spot to deliver a product that is utilitarian in nature so customers will accept increased cost of the drive system.”

Cashen said he wants to build on what the area’s strength is — skilled craftsmen valuing individuality and customization and “retrain them to be around 400 volts — it’s just that simple.”

Positive people, positive message

Cashen said he’s blessed to have a supportive family. “I’ve been around the world, I’ve failed and I’ve succeeded. My failures were never catastrophic and my successes not so great to stop working,” he said.

He has a home in Malibu, Calif., where his wife lives and works as a writer for the television and motion picture industries. He also has a home in South Bend and a lot of family still lives in the area.



Justin Cripe

All eyes were on Wil Cashen when he made a presentation to the Wakarusa and Nappanee councils in May.

“I want to try to do something to give back to my community,” he said. “If I come home and help actually fix things, it has an effect — in L.A. I can’t have an effect.”

“There are so many success stories here and that’s powerful from a community standpoint and a civic standpoint — how many communities are built on three things? How many are based on one thought process, are like minded about God, home and family? It’s amazing!”

He said despite some of the negativity in the area there’s also lots of positive attitude. He mentioned Wakarusa’s Town Manager Tom Roeder and Nappanee’s Mayor Larry Thompson as examples.

“They’re just wonderful guys. They’re family-oriented, positive, everything you want from leaders in a community,” he said. “When I met them, I thought, ‘How can I not be a part of that?’”

Cashen also has fond memories of working at Holiday Rambler as a young man. “This (project) has brought the romance back in my heart.”

“We can become the biggest manufacturer of trucks, buses and RVs in the world — why wouldn’t I want to be a part of that?”

— Wil Cashen

“I feel I’ve been brought to this moment so we can all work together as a team to make things better.”

Immediate plans

Cashen said manufacturing isn’t “something you turn on tomorrow,” so he’s working on acquiring partner companies to come to the area and is also working on an educational program with the state to help people who are unemployed.

Since President Barack Obama extended unemployment benefits for those in school, Cashen hopes to bring to fruition by the end of September an educational program to get workers in classes to teach them how to be around 400 volts and on the electric vehicle shop floor. The next step he said is to, “Hire

them!”

EMC is also working with Notre Dame business graduate students authoring grants and loans.

“That’s a lot of balls in the air. But when you have a great team like I have, you can pull off anything,” he said. Cashen has seven partners on his team.

“What I’m here to do first and foremost is bring hope and energy back to the area — with that we can conquer anything.”

He wants to put a training program in place, an education program in place and get President Obama to return here for the right reason.

“I don’t want to hear any more that we have the highest unemployment in the country. I want to hear we have the highest growth,” Cashen said.

Are we seeing any impact from stimulus dollars?

As an economic development professional, I am charged with the responsibility to assist existing businesses on their expansion needs while attracting new and diverse industries.

Well, ever since President Barack Obama's visit, Elkhart County has seen



Heiden-Guss

a remarkable number of companies sharing they want to employ 500 to 1,000 people. Ironically, they also want stimulus dollars for their business. Being an advocate of business and the enterprise system, as well as, community supporter,

I'm naturally "initially" attracted to the word jobs. However, at what cost?

The media continues to loom over us from all continents, oftentimes showcasing the negative side of our economic status... as I understand this sells. However, Elkhart County has also had a few positives. Fox News Huckabee Show (4 to

5 million population viewer base) actually said nice things about our community and how it continues to evolve from musical instruments, to RV industry, to consumer products.

Due to the media, officials have been stimulated enough to expand their planning and expand their vision.

So what do we do when strangers ask us for money? Multimillion dollar investment; attractive jobs; but would the business exist without stimulus dollars? Often times not. Trust me, I ask clients. Furthermore, I ask if I can do a credit check. This often is not the best way to make friends or influence people. Nonetheless, the necessary due diligence is required to perform my job responsibilities.

There are plenty of dreamers, I myself enjoy this now and then, but do I have a business plan? Have I secured traditional financing? Have I worked in a career of the dream for a significant period of time? Do I have a patent? Do I have significant barriers to entry? Hmmm – no. Well, how many times do you want to

hear this in one day?

So, the EDC seeks wisdom through many counselors — banks, its board, the state, railroads, etc. Yes, we do try and qualify them. How do we determine who is real and who isn't?

Corporations do not receive state incentives without delivering on the agreed upon terms. This is the same for local tax abatements. It is easy to run to the press to share something, but challenging to know if a project or investment is sustainable.

All I know is, ever since stimulus monies have been discussed, so has Elkhart County. We see a large number of firms in the "future vehicle industry" sector, such as hybrid, batteries, electric buses, etc., to solar and wind power generation. It is fascinating to see and learn firsthand what our future might be. We just want it to be a bright one. We want to believe in everyone, but only in "God We Trust."

Dorinda Heiden-Guss is the executive director of the Elkhart County Economic Development Corp.

Goshen Chamber to offer Webinar services

BRIDGET FRYMAN

Writer

If your employees can't make it to a training session, bring the training session to them.

The Goshen Chamber of Commerce will soon be offering Web broadcasts of its programs to its members through its Web site.

"I have gotten many members coming to me and saying, 'I see the topics and the timing just isn't right,'" said Brent Randall, Chamber vice president. In many cases, it is the owner of a small business who can't send employees to a seminar and still keep the business open.

"(Members) will be able to watch on their own schedule, and it will benefit more than we have been able to reach at this time," Randall said.

Members who cannot make it to a

seminar in person will be able to log on to the Web site and watch a session as it happens, he said.

In the meantime, the Chamber has also contracted to offer ServiceSkills.com customer service training to its membership. ServiceSkills.com is a division of Telephone Doctor Customer Service Training.

Telephone Doctor Customer Service Training has been offering products and services that help organizations improve the way they communicate with customers and co-workers for 25 years.

The Chamber has purchased licenses from Telephone Doctor and charges its members \$99 to use the 22 classes at their own pace over the course of a year. At the end of each course, employees complete a test and the results can be sent directly to their supervisors, Randall said.

"It's a good way to track progress and have employees move at their own pace," he said.

Dorinda Heiden-Guss, president of the Economic Development Corp. of Elkhart County, recently signed up her three-person staff for the service skills courses.

"It's amazing how much is in it," Heiden-Guss said. "I was very pleasantly surprised."

With only three people working at the EDC, Heiden-Guss could not afford to send everyone out of the office for training.

"It offered flexibility to fit our changing daily schedule," she said.

The Web-based courses also allow for interruptions and repetition.

"I have participated in other conferences that were one-time only," she said. "This allows you to go back to a program and revisit if you need to refresh yourself."

Confident in Elkhart

Vogue Beauty College opens new campus

ROGER SCHNEIDER

Writer

Joe Nash had a choice. He could either close down his Elkhart Beauty College or put a lot of cash into it to move it and improve it. His decision to put up the cash has resulted in a modernized, roomy facility that is educating dozens of cosmetology students.

Student Beverly Bell of Elkhart is happy Nash decided to keep the college in the community.

Bell and her daughter are both attending Vogue and plan a business together.

"I am really glad to be out of the trailer factory," Bell said. Her job at Coachmen was terminated during the downturn in the recreational vehicle industry. She was eligible for a retraining grant through Work Force Development and is using that to fund her cosmetology education.

"I am enjoying what I am doing now and I can't wait to work on real people," she said as she wound curlers into a mannequin's hair in preparation of learning how to give a permanent.

Bell's daughter, Crystal Holcomb, said she has wanted to be a cosmetologist since she was 10, and now that dream is coming true. She said her mother and her want to open their own salon with three to four booths and a tanning bed.

The decision

Nash's family owns four Vogue schools. They are in Elkhart, Huntington, Michigan City and Mishawaka.

The former Elkhart Beauty College was located on South Main Street next to the Elco Theater. It had been there about 36 years.

When the Elkhart government decided to renovate the historic theater, the college's space was needed. So Nash had to decide if the Elkhart community was the right place to relocate the college.

Nash found an empty building at 28236 Charlotte Ave. in the industrial park just west of Ind. 19. And after a renovation to make the interior into multiple hair-care stations and changing the name to match the other Vogue schools, the college opened on April 22.



Photo by Chad Weaver

Stephany Satoski of Syracuse does a perm for Nancy Kling of Osceola.

Nash said the move has been good for students and staff.

"It gives us a lot of opportunity to increase our enrollment because of the size," he said.

Also, the college is now certified by Work One for retraining grants, meaning laid off RV workers can use their grant to study for a cosmetology license.

Some of those workers, along with stay-at-home moms and people who are looking for a second job, are all swelling the enrollment.

Another factor in the attractiveness of his trade school, according to Nash, is the rising cost to attend a four-year college.

"Rising college costs have caused people to look at vocational schools," he said.

Marilyn Lisenko, who is the on-site supervisor, said her students are finding their opportunities in cosmetology are "endless."

Even during a recession people are going to need haircuts and hair care for special events, she said.

One of the sidelines at the school is offering inexpensive hair care to the public. By drawing in customers, advance level students get the opportunity to work on a variety of hair styles.

And for the public? "It's a lesson in frugality," Lisenko said.

Prices charged at the school are about half the cost local salons charge, she said.

"People still have to look good in a bad economy," she said, referring to how appearance is important to people going to job interviews.

Marketing the school

Getting the word out about the opportunities offered at the school is pretty simple. Most of the message is delivered by word-of-mouth, from cosmetologists who have graduated to people considering a similar career, Nash said.

Combined with the personal message approach, Nash said he uses TV and print advertisements to market the school.

And that marketing is drawing in nontraditional students.

"We are seeing many men looking at this as a viable career path," he said.

He said that for the most part, a cosmetologist license includes most of what a barber license includes.

The college's five-year plan projects "slow, measured growth," Nash said.

Right now the Elkhart campus has 52 students attending. Tuition is \$5,495. It takes 1,500 hours of training to become a cosmetologist in Indiana.



Photo by Roger Schneider

Beverly Bell, left, and her daughter Crystal Holcomb, right, work on placing rollers in a mannequin's hair.

Teaching cosmetology

"It's just not lipstick and hair spray," Nash said of cosmetology.

Students do learn the proper techniques to apply lipstick and hair spray, but they also study physiology and anatomy. Before working on someone's hair they put in up to 300 hours of training on mannequins.

And not all students graduate or obtain their license.

"Their attitude will determine the outcome," Nash said.

Helping others

Sometimes a customer is happily surprised that their hair care at the

college is free that day. Nash encourages the staff and students to provide "random acts of kindness" by granting an occasional customer a free treatment.

As the economy slid into recession students and staff noticed their customers were also a bit down.

"You could tell people really had their daubers down," Nash said.

He said customers who are given a free treatment are instantly perked up and grateful.

"The response has been overwhelming," he said.

"Our customers are important to us and we give back to them and that makes them feel like not all is doom and gloom," he said.

Also, the school's students made an effort to participate in the Relay-For-Life for the American Cancer Society and raised \$3,000.

"We have always had a social conscious in our schools and ask our students to give back," Nash said. "I feel it is important to do that."

Students also volunteer to trim off long pony tails being donated to Locks of Love, an agency that provides hairpieces for cancer patients. In the past eight years students have cut 2,800 of those pony tails.

While giving another student a hair tint, Maura Zepeda of Elkhart, the mother of a 3-year-old child said she wanted to become a cosmetologist since graduating high school.

"I just decided this is the time to do it."

She said cosmetology school is not for everyone, "but "if you want to do it you can accomplish it."



Photo by Roger Schneider

Joe Nash sits at his desk at Vogue Beauty College, Elkhart.

A new way to fly



Photo contributed

New Horizons Aviation at the Goshen Municipal Airport has added this Light Sport airplane to its fleet. The plane allows students to get their flying license in half the time it takes to obtain a private pilot's license. The Light Sport plane has restrictions, but Dan Steiner, president of New Horizon, said the plane provides a cost-effective way to fly. Pictured with the new plane is student Wendell Sullivan, left, and Steiner.

Elkhart Chamber is accredited

The Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce has been awarded the 4-Star Accreditation from the United States Chamber of Commerce. The accreditation was granted for the Elkhart Chamber's sound policies, effective organizational procedures and positive impact on the community, according to the U.S. Chamber.

"Accreditation recognizes Chambers for their high standards of practice, full accountability to members and steadfast commitment to community," said Thomas J. Donohue, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "We applaud these organizations for advancing these principles of free enterprise."

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, accreditation is the only national program that recognizes chambers for their effective organizational

procedures and community involvement. In order to receive accreditation, a Chamber must meet minimum standards in its operations and programs, including areas of governance, government affairs and technology. This extensive self-review can take three to six months to complete.

"Our Chamber prides itself on the service we provide for the businesses and citizens in this outstanding community," said Elkhart Chamber President Phil Penn. "I'm honored the U.S. Chamber has recognized our hard work and ability."

Of the 6,936 Chambers in the United States, 260 of these are accredited by the U.S. Chamber. The Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce is one of only three Chambers in Indiana to receive four-star accreditation.

Todd Allen Design wins ad award

Materials created by Todd Allen Design for Goshen Health System were recognized for marketing and advertising excellence in the annual Healthcare Advertising Awards.

Todd Allen Design received two Gold awards for its entries in the healthcare system group under \$500 million in revenue. In the Television Ad category, a w was received for the Goshen Center for Cancer Care 60-second TV spot titled "Encircles." The "Truths About Bariatrics" multimedia campaign garnered a gold award in the Total Advertising Campaign category. Created for Team Bariatrics, the campaign included a 60-second TV spot, radio, print ads and a direct mail piece complete with informational DVD.

LaCasa's goal is better neighborhoods



JOHN KLINE

Writer

When it comes to making positive changes in their community, the employees of local housing development corporation LaCasa Inc. have that goal down to a science.

Established in February of 1970, the organization first got its start through a collaboration of churches in Goshen concerned with the living and working conditions of area migrant farm workers.

"It would have been back in the early 1970s when the Goshen community really became aware that there were a significant number of immigrants working in the community. So, a group of churches in the area decided to get together and began offering services, such as a food pantry and residential housing assistance," said Becky Gascho, vice president of operations for LaCasa Inc. "But it wasn't long after that when it was discovered that there was an even larger need evident in the community involving the prevalence of low-income families, so the mission quickly expanded to include the low-income demographic."

The evolution

Now nearly 40 years later, the small not-for-profit organization has evolved into a full-fledged housing development corporation with a staff of 32 and a mission that encompasses nearly every aspect of low- to moderate-income community life, from home ownership counseling and community building to property rentals, home rehabilitation and immigration counseling.



Photo by John Kline

Volunteer Pat Myers puts a fresh coat of paint on a home at 110 W. Monroe St., Goshen, during the Help-A-House Community Work Day.

LaCasa information

Address:

• 202 N. Cottage Ave., Goshen

Phone:

• (574) 533-4450

Web site:

• www.lacasagoshen.org

Types of assistance:

• For information on how to purchase a home, call 1-866-897-3899 toll free or (574) 533-4450

• For information on renting a house or apartment from LaCasa, call the leasing office at Arbor Ridge, 574-537-1896 to find

out if you qualify

• For help or information on the immigration process, call (574) 533-4450 .

• If you own your home and can't afford repairs and live in the city of Goshen, pick up an application for the Help-A-House program at LaCasa's office



Photo by Justin Cripe

Volunteers work to replace the back roof of a home at 502 N. Seventh St. in Goshen during LaCasa's annual Help-A-House Community Work Day.

"One thing that I really appreciate about LaCasa is its ability to be true to its mission, yet be sensitive to the gaps in the community," said Gascho. "I know in the 10 years that I've been here, LaCasa has grown and changed significantly."

Home ownership

As VP of Operations, Gascho's responsibility centers primarily on the home ownership aspect of the corporation.

"I oversee the Home Ownership Center, which has numerous functions," Gascho said. "I oversee our community building and organizing, our immigration services, and I also do a lot of grant writing."

As with most non-profit organizations, receiving grants plays a big part in LaCasa's ability to provide the many services it now offers to its clients.

"We have grants that come in from both the state and federal government, and a lot of those funds we bring into the community to address housing issues, such as first-time home buyers and owner-occupied rehabilitation," Gascho said. "We also work with the local government, numerous foundations, businesses, banks, individual donors, churches.

It's a pretty broad funding source."

Luckily for Elkhart County and its residents, it would appear that funding is not going to waste — a fact demonstrated by the more than \$15.5 million in local economic investments facilitated by the organization in 2008 alone.

Being classed as a not-for-profit, Gascho noted that many people don't seem to realize that LaCasa is still a business, and must be run as such.

"We certainly have to be business savvy to survive for as many years as we have. You can't do your mission without meeting your bottom line," Gascho said. "There is that balance of being dedicated to providing a service that your clients might not be able to pay for while also finding out how you're going to afford it.

"Dealing with funders is very complicated, because it means there is usually compliance issues. We have 32 people on staff, and four that deal just with the many funding aspects of the business," she said.

Volunteers important

While a dedicated staff is a necessary part of any not-for-profit, the majority of the corporation's workforce is made up

of everyday community volunteers.

"We have paid positions, but we also depend on our volunteers," Gascho said. "We think that's just the perfect mix that we can offer our community — those opportunities to give back."

And perhaps in no way is that volunteer dedication better expressed than in the corporation's yearly Help-A-House community outreach project, when volunteers from the community offer their time and skills to rehabilitate the homes of low- to-moderate income homeowners in the Goshen area.

"Every year we are amazed by Goshen and the spirit of volunteerism that's here," Gascho said. "For Help-A-House this year we had more than 300 people show up for kickoff day, and that's in addition to the many individuals and groups that come in and offer their time throughout the year."

As for what plans the not-for-profit organization has for reaching out to the community in the coming months, Gascho made note of one big project involving a partnership between LaCasa and the Elkhart County Health Department that is just getting off the ground.

"As part of the stimulus package,

we have been awarded along with the Elkhart County Health Department a lead grant, so we are going to be working together, where they will do education and LaCasa is going to be rehabbing homes that have a lead problem,” Gascho said. “The program has already begun, so we are taking applications as we speak. This is a several-year grant, so we are encouraging people to come in and take advantage.”

Julia King, new interim community outreach coordinator for LaCasa, will also be working on several neighborhood development projects for the organization as a way to reach out to the community.

“Primarily what this position does is work with developing neighborhoods, developing goals and priorities, helping them develop a voice in the community,” King said. “LaCasa has a goal of working to create stronger neighborhoods. We want neighborhoods in Goshen where people want to live, neighborhoods that are good on multiple levels, be it socially, economically...where people have a voice, control over their lives.

“We want to create that vision,” she said.

And the best way to do that? Getting people involved.

“This job has a pretty broad focus, where one-on-one conversations do happen, but there is also a lot of neighborhood building, where we work with a core group of people interested in establishing an association,” King said. “Right now we’re working with a few target neighborhoods in the area to do just that. One example of this is Neighborhood Games, which just happened. That’s an event that happens annually where different associations form teams and compete against each other in lighthearted competition for prizes.

“It’s a fun experience. It brings communities together, and it’s good for the health of the neighborhoods as well,” she said.

And that’s exactly what King and her staff are looking for when it comes to results at the end of the day.

“In the end it’s about getting people involved, and communicating their needs, and having a responsive government,” King said. “It’s just kind of a win-win when everyone is engaged.”

Summer 2009

Focusing on positives

When faced with an economic climate like the one this county is currently experiencing, Gascho noted that the need for positive action such as that described by King, is growing more prominent with each passing day.

“Two years ago we were going just gangbusters with these first-time homebuyers, getting people into homes, and that has slowed down considerably,” Gascho said. “Now we’re spending more time with people dealing with foreclosure, how to work through that, and how



Photo by Justin Cripe
Another home gets a makeover by LaCasa volunteers.

to save their property. And as far as the issues we’re seeing in the neighborhoods today, there just seems to be more people who are concerned with jobs, unemployment, especially within the last 18 months.”

That said, Gascho noted LaCasa has never been one to balk in the face of adversity, so when the needs of the community begin to change like they have for so many in recent months, you can expect the mission of LaCasa and its staff to be changing right along with them.

“I would never bet on LaCasa staying the same,” said Gascho. “I believe the economy is going to turn around, and as a result of that I believe there is going to be a whole new set of projects and issues we will be involved in. Now whether that’s new building projects, or rehabilitation, that’s anyone’s guess, but I’m sure in the end LaCasa will be involved in one way or another.”

LaCasa programs

Home ownership

LaCasa offers Homeownership and Financial Fitness classes to explain the home buying process, making wise consumer choices and avoid predatory lenders and other pitfalls related to homeownership.

- Counseling

LaCasa Inc., an approved HUD counseling agency and member of Neighborworks America, offers certified counselors to help home buyers.

LaCasa offers one-to-one counseling for pre-purchase of a home, analysis of credit and how to improve credit scores, identifying good mortgage products vs. bad lending and predatory loans, reviews for possible grant and other assistance and help for families and individuals with loss mitigation or foreclosure prevention if a mortgage is in trouble.

- Savings Accounts

LaCasa can help triple a person’s savings for a house, education or to start or expand a small business.

• Mortgage Loans are available for first time homebuyers.

• LaCasa offers its Help-A-House or low cost rehabilitation loans to help homeowners maintain their property.

Community Building

Community Building and Organizing works with neighborhoods to establish an identity, develop leaders, set priorities, organize for action and accomplish goals related to neighborhood improvement and quality of life for residents. This program is central to LaCasa’s community effectiveness, linking LaCasa’s resources to family and neighborhood goals.

LaCasa’s outreach coordinator begins by meeting with people who live in the neighborhood. The neighbors identify issues affecting their neighborhood and set specific goals for improvements. Residents are empowered to work with city government, local businesses, churches, and other partners to achieve their goals.

Immigration Services

Immigration and Language Services answers questions and completes paperwork for immigrants from any country who qualify for an immigration benefit under the U.S. law. Counselors are trained to assist a client step-by-step with instructions, personalized for their specific circumstances.

— From LaCasa Inc.

Challenging times reinforce need for manager, supervisor training

By Kathleen K. Brickley,
Partner, Barnes & Thornburg LLP

Michiana businesses are under increased pressure today as they contend with difficult economic conditions. Shrinking budgets, reductions in force and layoffs all have become commonplace for businesses seeking to survive.



Kathleen
Brickley

These circumstances only add to the current demands placed on businesses to keep their houses in order — an objective that can be achieved by properly training frontline managers and supervisors to understand and properly handle workplace issues.

It has always been important for businesses to invest in proper training of its managers and supervisors. This concept was reinforced in 1998 when the U.S. Supreme Court considered the responsibilities of employers in sexual harassment claims in the cases of *Faragher v. Boca Raton* and *Burlington Industries Inc. v. Ellerth*. When an employee experiences hostile environment harassment, but does not suffer a tangible employment loss, the employer is presumptively liable for the supervisor's harassment, but can avoid liability if it shows: (1) that it exercised "reasonable care to prevent and promptly correct any sexually harassing behavior;" and (2) that the employee "failed to take advantage of the corrective or preventive measures" made available. This affirmative defense makes it imperative for an employer to, among other things, train managers to identify, implement and document appropriate corrective action.

While harassment issues have long been a focus of training programs, there are others that are equally important, including:

Retaliation

Nowadays, it is common for employees to file discrimination charges against their employers while they continue to work for them. This generally creates an atmosphere of anger, tension and distrust for all concerned. In turn,

this situation often leads to a claim of retaliation by the employee.

A claim of retaliation is serious, indeed, and one that is very difficult to defend. It is essential that employers train their supervisors and managers not only as to the importance of treating all similarly situated employees consistently, but also about how to avoid engaging in behavior that can be seen as retaliatory.

Fair Labor Standards Act

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) mandates that non-exempt employees get paid: (1) at least the federal minimum wage for all hours worked; and (2) overtime pay at time and one-half the regular rate of pay for hours worked over 40 in a work week. Collective actions and class actions with claims of misclassification of employees as exempt under the FLSA, failure to properly calculate overtime pay, and failure to include compensable time in an employee's hours are commonplace.

Plaintiffs' attorneys have found these cases to be quite lucrative. Misclassifications and mistakes abound. Any single violation found is multiplied by the number of employees in similar circumstances. If the violation is found to be knowing and willful, the damages are calculated over three years for each employee, rather than two years. Additionally, the successful plaintiff's attorney is entitled to have his attorney's fees paid by the company.

Most companies have policies and procedures created at the corporate level that are disseminated throughout every facility in the organization. Thus, if a suit is filed in one jurisdiction and the plaintiffs are successful there, it is typical that copycat lawsuits are filed against the company in other jurisdictions where the company has facilities.

Employers can limit the likelihood of successful claims filed by conducting frequent internal audits and reviewing their overtime pay procedures, job descriptions and employee policies for FLSA compliance.

Interviewing and hiring

Discrimination claims sometimes find their genesis in the failure to hire

an applicant. Applicants may claim that they were not hired because the employer did not want to be burdened by the applicant's family member's health condition or union background or because the hiring supervisor preferred someone with a background similar to the supervisor's in terms of color, race, age, gender, national origin or religion because the hiring manager did not want to be inconvenienced by a pregnancy or child-rearing issues.

Supervisors and managers must be trained in the laws that affect their hiring decisions, the questions that are acceptable to be asked, the stereotypical lines of thought that are not equal and the method to document the rationale for the hiring selection that was made.

Family Medical Leave Act

In January 2009, new Family Medical Leave Act regulations became effective, providing additional protections for employees who have relatives in the military and revising some notice and certification requirements. Employers need to modify their policies, post new posters and train their supervisors and managers with respect to administration of the amended FMLA.

Immigration Compliance

More aggressive enforcement in recent years by Immigration and Customs Enforcement has made it imperative for managers and supervisors to timely and completely fill out I-9 forms and to assure themselves that their employees are legally authorized to work in the United States. This will help to protect themselves and their company from civil and even criminal penalties. As well, it is important for managers and supervisors to understand the importance of responding to no-match letters.

Union Avoidance

Especially in times like these when business is down and employees are concerned about their jobs, managers and supervisors must understand the importance of good communication with their subordinates. They need to understand how important it is to keep employees informed about the status of

Continued on Page 16

Create your dream office

JUSTIN CRIPE

Writer

It's fun to dream.

As a child, I dreamt of being a professional athlete. Then once I realized I wasn't very good at sports, but knew a lot of worthless information about the subject, I decided being a broadcaster would be my ideal job. As it is, I am a reporter and a photographer, relying only on my knowledge of sports to win friendly wagers at bars.

So now there are much more plausible goals, financial stability being the main one. Owning a sectional couch sometime in my life is another.

I like my current job. I even like my boss. However, I envy very little about him other than the fact that he has an office. Everything is wide open where I work, other than the room that my boss calls his own. That's cool. I want that.

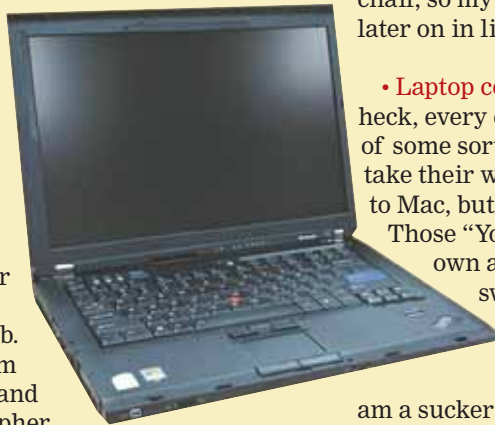
Here now — in the unlikely event that I ever become successful enough to have my own office — are the items that I deem mandatory to corporate success.

• **Couch** — I am one of those people

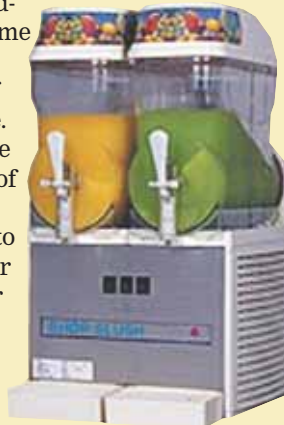


who does my best thinking staring blankly at the ceiling, hoping that magical idea comes to me in a vision from above. Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't. Either way I can get a decent nap in. Which is why I want a couch. Plus I slouch when I sit in a chair, so my spine would appreciate it later on in life.

• **Laptop computer** — Every office — heck, every desk — needs a computer of some sort. Laptops allow people to take their work with them. I prefer PC to Mac, but I am flexible on this issue. Those “You're not cool unless you own a Mac” commercials don't sway me. But then again, I've never professed to be cool.



• **Snow cone machine** — I am a sucker for a good snow cone or any ice-mixed-with-liquid-sugar concoction, regardless of what time of year it is. It reminds me of a simpler time. And I think the vast majority of people feel the same way. Go to any county fair in the summer and the snow cone booth is one of the most popular booths around.



• **Punching bag** — I believe some type of stress reliever is of utmost importance to any office. I've seen the frustration that can come with being a supervisor over a group of people. It's not pleasant. At the risk of taking it out on any of my co-workers, a punching bag is the best alternative. If you are so inclined, cut out a picture of a sworn enemy and tape it to the bag. You will feel much better afterward.

• **A video phone** — Communication of some sort is key in any profession. I remember not too long ago these were considered “the wave of the future.” I don't know if they even



make them anymore. Apple probably does.

• **A lock on my door** — Because “open door policies” have their limits. I am pretty willing to talk to anyone at any time about anything, but I do value my alone time as well.

As you may have noticed, I consider the key to success to be continuity: Keeping in constant communication with your fellow co-workers and making sure morale is high.

Obviously there are plenty of other items that are considered much more necessary. What office is complete without lights, a desk and a motivational poster of Chuck Norris? But this should provide a solid foundation.

Maybe having these items will not turn my hypothetical company into a Fortune 500 list-topper, but it provides that always-important feng shui that I hear so much about.



State has programs to help with training

The Indiana General Assembly has created programs to help Hoosier businesses retrain and train their workers as the skills needed to compete in the global marketplace change. Here is a synopsis of those programs. Information is from the Indiana Economic Development Corp.

Technology Enhancement Certification for Hoosiers (www.in.gov/ide/TECH.htm)

This program provides a reimbursement grant to help companies and non-profit agencies keep up with the need for trained workers in information technology. Companies must have been in operation for at least a year.

The grant limit is \$50,000, or \$2,500 per employee or 50 percent of the IT training budget, whichever is less.

Training eligible for the grant must be by an industry-certified training provider and resulting in a full-time employee receiving a portable certification

in systems administration, systems engineering, software development, professional certifications and other certifications in advanced e-business enabling applications.

Instructor-led, computer-based training and self-study costs are eligible for reimbursement provided the employee obtains the appropriate vendor certification upon completion of the coursework. Certification training eligible for reimbursement is based on the individual needs of the company.

Skills Enhancement Fund (www.in.gov/iede/SEF.htm)

This fund provides financial assistance to businesses committed to training their work force. Trainees must be Indiana residents. SEF reimburses eligible training expenses over a two-year period. Companies may reapply for additional funds after their initial two-year term. This program does not provide funds for training that is required by law.

Eligible companies include manufac-

turing companies, distribution centers and regional headquarters (if it does significant business with out-of-state entities)

Companies can receive up to \$200,000 for retraining existing workers. Grants may be available for training new employees.

Businesses must commit to continuing their operations for at least five years after the training grant is completed.

Grants may be used for:

- basic skills training, including reading, writing and math.
- Skills that enhance an employee's general knowledge, employability and flexibility in the workplace.
- Company-specific skills.
- Quality-assurance skills, including statistical process control, total quality management, ISO and QS.

Costs eligible for reimbursement include instruction, travel and material and supplies. The maximum amount awarded through the program usually does not exceed 50 percent of a company's training budget.

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Law

Continued from Page 14

business and the company's goals and focus for the short-term future. They must promptly handle workplace issues and provide employees with roadmaps to improve their performance and deal with employees consistently and fairly. All of these are keys to keeping morale high and helping employees to feel secure in the workplace.

Failure to do so can create situations ripe for unionization. When employees feel insecure and that they have no way to predict what they need to do to be secure in their jobs, they may seek the assistance of a union in their search for security.

This is a particularly hot issue right now as the Obama administration charts a course toward passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, which would dramatically change the process of union organizing in this country.

Businesses need to train and remind their managers and supervisors of the best practices in employee relations

from interviewing and hiring to performance reviews, discipline and everyday decisions and communications. Doing so can go a long way toward improving a business's opportunity for success and to remain union-free, even in the most challenging times.

Kathleen K. Brickley is an attorney in Barnes & Thornburg LLP's South Bend office. She is administrator of the office's Labor and Employment Law Department. She concentrates her full-service employment practice on workplace investigations, audits, supervisory training, discrimination and retaliation and Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) litigation, and union campaigns. For more information on this article, contact Kathy at kbrickley@btlaw.com or (574) 237-1105.

This article should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion on any specific facts or circumstances. The contents are intended for general informational purposes only.

There's a lot of positive activity in Syracuse

The Syracuse-Wawasee Chamber of Commerce, which services the northern part of Kosciusko County is blazing new trails.

With just one staff person and a very strong and vigilant board, we are moving forward through a very tough economy. With a small decline in membership from last year, we are still signing up new members and new businesses every month. So, things are happening in and around Syracuse! This past winter and spring we have been very busy planning networking events for our members and non-members alike to become connected and engaged. We believe this to be a very important service that our Chamber can offer right now.

The Chamber will also be offering some seminars and workshops to offer businesses ideas on how they can cut costs and save in this tough economy. The annual Chamber of Commerce Golf Outing, which is our largest fund-raiser for the year, is just behind us. We are now gearing up for an exciting summer. A new project for the summer is our

Community Artisan & Farmers Market. This event is held every Saturday, now through October. It is held at one of our beautiful parks – Crosson Mill Veteran Memorial Park, here in Syracuse. We have new and different vendors each week, offering everything from plants, flowers, baked goods, woodworking, farm fresh eggs to Alpaca yarn and handmade jewelry. Our policy is that the items must be handmade or homegrown.

In July, our community is buzzing with people coming to stay at one of our many lakes. Fireworks are the big hit, with each lake providing a great show! The Syracuse Lake show is July 3rd, Lake Wawasee's "Big, Bang, Boom" is on July 4th, the Flotilla Road Race is on July 5th, the "Flotilla" boat parade is scheduled for July 11, which is the grand finale of the 4th of July festivities.

Each Thursday evening this summer, the Syracuse Parks Department offers a free concert at Lakeside Park, called "Music in the Park."

The first weekend in August is when Syracuse Days arrives. This year it will

be August 6, 7 and 8, Thursday through Saturday. This event draws people from surrounding counties. This is the time to take advantage of lots of sales. Our communitywide garage sales are a big hit, along with sidewalk sales.

This year we are planning to "Celebrate Syracuse" with a parade on Saturday, some other events, including Battle of the Bands at the park, 3 on 3 basketball tournament, sponsored by the Lakeland Youth Center and a sidewalk chalk art contest in the downtown area. The following weekend is the second annual Wawasee Kiwanis Triathlon After the first year being a huge success, we are counting on this year's event being even bigger and better.

September then brings somewhat cooler weather and art lovers can visit us on Sept. 9 for the sixth annual Street Art Festival. This event brings vendors from all over the state and beyond.

Come visit Syracuse – "Stay & Play!"

— Tammy Cotton, executive director
Syracuse Wawasee Chamber of Commerce

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Goshen

Chamber is 'champion' for Goshen

The mission of the Goshen Chamber of Commerce is to "Champion our Community's Business Future."

One of the ways the Goshen Chamber meets this mission is to make sure that our elected officials understand how legislation and regulations impact the ability of Goshen businesses to be profitable and provide employment for the citizens of our community.

The Chamber does this at the local level by attending City Council meetings and working with the County Commissioners and County Council.

At the state level we host the "Third House" program when the Indiana General Assembly is in session and maintain a strong working relationship with our state senator and representatives.

At the federal level we make trips to Washington to meet with members of the Indiana delegation. We also host Rep. Mark Souder on a regular basis



Photo contributed

Dave Dougherty, Goshen Chamber of Commerce executive director, is pictured on his visit to Washington, D.C.

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and will be hosting Sen. Evan Bayh and his staff in the coming month.

Our Public Policy Committee meets monthly to review proposed legislation and regulations and presents policy positions to the Chamber's Board of Directors. You can view these policy positions by visiting the Chamber's Web site at www.goshen.org and clicking on the Legislative Action Center button:

From here you can also write your elected officials. We also send out updates to our members on a regular basis and provide special alerts on issues of importance to the business community.

As always we are "Together, Growing Goshen."

— *David B. Daugherty, president*
Goshen Chamber of Commerce

Goshen audio visual company offers services to churches, others

Imagination Pro Media in Goshen is helping churches and others present professional quality sound.

"God has been good and we are very fortunate that business has remained steady," said Jim Stembel, president of Imagination Pro Media. "Through these tough economic times we are pleased to see ministries still expanding and improving their technologies."

Imagination Pro Media is an audio visual company. The owner, Jim Stembel, has experience developing and contributing to sound systems located all over the world.

He previously was employed by

Crown International, where he was instrumental in the audio for the 2000 Sydney and 2008 Beijing Olympics as well as in Disney theme parks worldwide. He has also been involved in the audio systems for sports arenas and stadiums across the country.

Imagination Pro Media has focused its efforts predominantly in the church market. The company also did the audio for a WFRN concert featuring Christian superstars, Casting Crowns and Aaron Shust.

For more information on Imagination Pro Media contact Jeff Petermann at (574) 361-6601.

Health costs can be controlled no matter what the economy is doing

I have to say that I am a bit weary these days of the words that continue to be repeated in the headlines, “In these tough economic times...”. So, it surprises me that even I myself am beginning this article with, “In these



Connie Bryan

tough economic times, it is important to prioritize your employees’ health.”

As both an occupational health nurse and owner of a corporate wellness company, I have had a unique view of both sides of the coin. One day, I may send one

employer’s unsuspecting employee to the emergency room with a life-threatening blood pressure. The next day, I may discover that another long-time client company is struggling to stay in business and that its workplace wellness plan is now by the wayside. It’s sobering to think “what if” in these cases...What if I hadn’t been there to alert the hypertensive employee? And what if there’s another individual just like him working for the client that has preventive health initiatives on hold?

While our own business has been impacted by several employers’ needs to cut costs, it’s important to keep in mind that health risks don’t stop with the economy. In fact, anyone’s blood pressure, weight, cholesterol, blood sugar, depression, anxiety, aches and pains, attendance and medical compliance can even worsen in the economic downturn. Lay-offs or the fear of lay-offs can cause people to sleep, eat, cope, exercise, spend money, or follow a doctor’s orders differently and oftentimes not for the better.

A local example

Jerry Trolz, owner of Goshen Stamping Co., also knows firsthand the hardship of our down economy and the reward of workplace wellness. At the recommendation of his company’s insurance provider, this self-funded employer agreed to offer on-site health screenings to his employees on the company dime. Days later, as preparations were being completed, business came to a standstill. Unprecedented company layoffs loomed. Even so, Trolz followed through on the

healthy initiative, and within his group of 40, one employee was alerted to a life-threatening condition. Within days, this person was hospitalized, and a family physician confirmed afterward that the workplace screening saved his life.

“We’re grateful that we were part of catching it in time,” Trolz said. “Even though the economy goes up and down, problems with health care are there. Moving forward with preventive health is worthwhile, rewarding, and potentially life-saving.” According to Trolz, the screenings were well received by all, the at-risk employee is back on the job, and business has bounced back too.

Provide information

As an employer, it is important to offer your employees as much information as possible to help them stay healthy, and there are many low-cost steps you can take:

Start up a health bulletin board in the break room with periodic updates as a simple way to get information to employees with little to no cost.

Consider implementing a lunch-hour walking program to get people moving.

Some companies have conducted in-house “biggest loser” weight-loss contests with great success.

Substitute whole-grain bagels or fruit for doughnuts or cookies in the boardroom meetings.

Be certain that 10 percent of your work force is CPR and first aid certified. Quick response to a workplace emergency can be critical and even lifesaving.

Health system ranked first in job satisfaction

Goshen Health System has been ranked the top health care organization in the nation for “Overall Job Satisfaction,” according to data from HR Solutions International Inc.

GHS exceeded HR Solutions’ national health care normal data in all 18 categories measured, according to Murat Philippe, Principal Consultant for HR Solutions.

“On behalf of HR Solutions, I would like to congratulate Goshen Health System for creating a top-tier organizational culture and rewriting the book on what it means to be a Best-in-Class organiza-

tion,” Philippe said. Remind employees of any established employee assistance program counseling that may be available to them and their families. The economic times can produce higher stress for everyone, and this simple reminder may be all that’s needed to help them navigate the anxiety.

Lately, I hear a lot of employees asking, “Do I eat and pay the bills, or do I buy my medication?” Many pharmacies offer low-cost generics today. Make these pharmacy lists available to your employees.

Offer or continue to offer free or low-cost screenings to your employees. Studies show that one averted heart attack can save up to \$70,000 in medical claims and lost productivity, and an averted case of diabetes can save hundreds of thousands in life-long complications. If that’s not a potential economic stimulus for a budget-minded company, I wonder what is.

In times like these when we are all trying to buckle down and control costs, healthcare persists as a huge company expense. Running an efficient business requires not only efficient methods and resources, but also a team of healthy, motivated, and efficient employees. Most will agree by now that spending wellness dollars up front will lead to a return on investment. That hasn’t changed. It still makes dollars and sense.

Connie Bryan, RN is owner of On-Site Health Solutions LLC in Bremen. She can be contacted at connie@onsitehealthsolutions.net.

tion,” Philippe said.

HR Solutions, a Chicago-based consulting firm, is endorsed by the American Hospital Association for surveys and other services related to measuring and improving employee engagement and retention.

Goshen Health System employees participated in the HR Solutions’ survey in December. Those employee responses were compared to more than 350,000 respondents nationally, with the results placing the health system at the top of HR Solutions’ national health care database.

Bulletin board

Volunteer recognized

Retired teacher Carol Grieser of Goshen has been honored by the Indiana Retired Teachers Association for outstanding volunteer community service in Indiana. Grieser is one of eight statewide winners of the Anthem Blue Cross-Blue Shield Award, which is presented to the outstanding volunteer from each of IRTA's eight geographic

areas. The awards were presented at the IRTA Representative Assembly luncheon in Indianapolis. Carol was nominated by the Elkhart County Retired Teachers Association Community Service Committee

Metronet Web site improved

More data, more speed, more possibilities is the theme of an improved Web site launched by St. Joe Valley Metronet.

According to the company, the site, <http://www.stjoevalleymetronet.org>, has been redesigned to be a more useful and dynamic resource for new and current clients.

The improved site helps users identify benefits of subscribing to the Metronet by offering links to separate pages focused on each of the Metronet's main client sectors.

The company says SJVMI gives users access to low-cost, high-bandwidth and high-speed telecommunications through a network of more than 50 miles of fiber-optic cable stretching through South Bend, Mishawaka and St. Joseph County.

"While users will discover the web site has a new, updated look, that's not the most important reason for this change," said Mary Jan Hedman, executive director of Metronet. "We are making it easier to find information. The new site is more engaging, easier to navigate and provides pages specifically for end-users as well as vendors," she explained. The redesigned site will enable current clients to get more from the service and help potential customers more easily understand how they can benefit from the Metronet.

Midland Engineering receives award

Kenneth Sage, vice president of Business Development, announced that Midland Engineering has been awarded the Gold Circle Safety Award by the National Roofing Contractors Association. This award was given to Midland for its work on The Ascent at Roebing's Bridge project in Covington, Ky.

The award was given during the NRCA's annual convention in Las Vegas.

According to Midland officials, the project, a 22-story condominium, has a crescent shaped stripe design. The architectural elements of the project changed the landscape of the Robeling Bridge area of Covington. The project included 15,000 square feet of roofing space, and incorporated the Adhered system using Sarnafil custom colored limestone and blue 6-mil G410 membrane.

Time Flies will run errands and more

Skyler Walker has started Time Flies Errand in Elkhart.

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Bulletin board

"Time is a precious commodity," Walker said. "I wanted to start a business where I could help people be able to enjoy what matters most to them — with Time Flies I have done that."

Time Flies Errand Services offers a variety of services, including pet sitting, house sitting, home and office cleaning and waiting services — a service that allows the customer not to have to sit around for an entire day waiting for a plumber or delivery.

Walker has also added a corporate concierge service to the company's portfolio of offerings that enables businesses to offer their employees several of the benefits that his company specializes in to boost morale and help the employees focus on their tasks at hand.

Time Flies Errand Services can be reached at (574) 361-6601 or visit Time Flies on the Web at www.timeflies365.com

Brian Harding honored for his aid to community

Brian Harding, Managing Director of Residential Services at Real Estate Management Corp. has been selected as a winner of the 2009 Ernestine M. Raclin Community Leadership Award for demonstrating a positive leadership role in his local community through volunteer activities. This award, issued by 1st Source Bank, honors Raclin, Chairman Emeritus of 1st Source Corp., who set an example throughout her career by giving her time and talents to help others.

Harding was honored for his personal commitment, dedication, time spent, creativity and success of projects in the areas of arts and education, human services and economic development.

In the area of arts and education, Harding has contributed his leadership abilities to the Northern Indiana Historical Society, Studebaker Museum and South Bend Symphony. As a part of his human services activities, Harding has been actively involved for many years with the Saint Anthony de Padua Church and School, Saint Joseph High School, Indiana University South Bend, United Way and Hannah's House.

Harding has also provided leadership and support to the economic development and real estate industries through many years of services to the Institute of Real Estate Management, Greater South Bend Housing Inc. and the Saint Joseph County Chamber of Commerce Project CONNECT.

Summer 2009

More Troyer Group employees certified

The Troyer Group Inc., Mishawaka, has announced 17 of its employees are now Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design accredited professionals.

Recently seven employees contributed to the growing number at The Troyer Group, representing all departments. These employees include: Myron Bollman, P.E., vice president of information technology; project architects, Kyle Copelin, AIA, Sean Frederick, AIA, and Andrew Roche, AIA; Rich DeLong, design associate; Steve Domonkos, electrical systems designer; and Wendi Lopez, interior design associate.

The Troyer Group established itself as a leader in sustainable design in 1971 and continues to stay at the forefront of the green building movement. The firm encourages all professionals to become LEED Accredited and look for opportunities to promote energy efficiency and green building practices in all of its design projects.

The Troyer Group (www.troyergroup.com) provides comprehensive planning,

design, and construction administration services.

Company offers GIS alternative

Wightman Petrie has recently introduced a new information management program for its clients: the Community Asset Management Program.

According to the company, this service now is designed for smaller municipalities needing the functionality of a Geographic Information System department but not the expense of one.

According to the company, a town utilizing the system for utility management would benefit from: having all utility information in one central location; having access to information previously available only through field research, paper files or people's memories; being able to track the location and condition of water mains, valves, sewer mains, lift stations and more; querying the database for specifics; generating maintenance schedules; and creating a list of residents whose water supply would be interrupted due to routine maintenance.

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Bulletin board

Murray promoted at Lake City Bank

Kirtus Murray has been promoted to senior vice president and retail lending manager at Lake City Bank.



Murray

Murray has been with Lake City Bank eight years. His previous duties included serving as office manager, mortgage loan officer, and vice president of retail lending.

Murray graduated from Bethel College with a degree in business administration and resides in Goshen with his family. He is a member of Warsaw Noon Optimists and serves on the board of directors for Kosciusko Habitat for Humanity.

Lake City Bank is headquartered in Warsaw.

Damon Motor Coach doing better

Damon Motor Coach, a Thor Industries subsidiary, said it has felt the economic crunch over the past year, but is bouncing back.

"We actually increased market share during the past 12 months," said Matt Thompson, vice president of sales. "In recent weeks there is some very positive news for us and hopefully the industry," he added.

Damon has announced it is back to five full days of production and now has a backlog of orders. "This is a rarity in the hardhit RV Industry, especially Elkhart County," said Bill Fenech, president of Damon. "Although encouraging, it's too early to call this a recovery," Fenech says. The company is cautiously optimistic about the recent improvement in business. He went on to say that he and his staff will be watching produc-

tion closely, and matching that with demand.

He also announced that Damon has hired back a group of previously laid off workers and intends to hire more. "Exact numbers will be dependent on sustaining current sales trends, however, Damon dealers are becoming more optimistic about future business," Fenech concluded.

Almac Sotebeer wins design award

Almac Sotebeer Inc. of Elkhart was recently awarded an American Buildings Company Excellence in Design Award in the category of Recreational Facility for the RV/MH Hall of Fame, Phase II. ABC's Excellence in Design Awards recognizes builders and roofers for their innovation and distinction in design.

This year, judges chose from more than 175 entries to select the best projects in each of the following categories: Agricultural; Church/Religious Center; Commercial; Government/Institutional; Manufacturing/Industrial; Office; Recreation; Retail; Roofing; Self Storage; Transportation; and Warehouse/Distribution.

Regina Emberton named to '40' list

Regina Emberton, CCIM, vice president of brokerage services for CB Richard Ellis, was recently honored as a 2009 best leader in the Michiana Forty Under 40 program.

The award honors 40 young professionals under the age of 40 whose contributions and accomplishments continue to make a significant impact in their workplace and community. Recipients are selected based on business accomplishments, community involvement

and considerable career milestones.

Emberton has been involved with many organizations, including Transpo, United Way of St. Joseph County, Pi Alpha Alpha, Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce and Downtown South Bend, Inc. She is also a volunteer with Junior Achievement of Michiana and the YWCA.

Bank donates to hospital foundation

Joe Pierce, president of Farmers State Bank, delivered a check for \$2,500 to Jen Will, coordinator of the Parkview LaGrange Foundation. The gift was the culmination of a matching challenge issued by Farmers State Bank earlier this year to assist with the launch of the Parkview LaGrange Foundation. For every two dollars raised by the foundation, up to the first \$5,000 in donations, the bank pledged to give an additional dollar.

"Like Parkview LaGrange Hospital, Farmers State Bank believes in giving back to its community," said Pierce. "We, too, are committed to the well-being of our customers and the communities we serve."

"We are very grateful to Farmers State Bank for their support," said Will. "Their generous gift will help us to continue to develop health care programs and services that benefit those who live and work in LaGrange County and the surrounding area."

All donations to the Parkview LaGrange Foundation remain in LaGrange County to support continued improvement of the hospital's services, facilities, equipment and programs, such as the Medication Assistance Program, which provides emergency medication for those who do not have the personal resources or medication benefits to cover the cost.

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Economic indicators

Unemployment

U.S.

May	9.1%
April	8.9%
May 2008	5.5%

Indiana

May	10.4%
April	9.9%
May 2008	5.1%

Elkhart-Goshen

May	17.5%
April	17.7%
May 2008	6.1%

Michigan City

May	11.7%
April	11.6%
May 2008	5.4%

South Bend

May	11.1%
April	10.7%
May 2008	5.8%

LaGrange County

May	16.6%
April	17.6%
May 2008	5.6%

St. Joseph County

May	11.0%
April	10.8%
May 2008	5.8%

Kosciusko County

May	12.5%
April	12.1%
May 2008	5.3%

New construction building permits

Elkhart County

	April		May
Residential	10	Residential	10
Commercial	1	Commercial	0
Industrial	0	Industrial	0

City of Elkhart

	April		May
Residential	0	Residential	0
Commercial	0	Commercial	0
Industrial	0	Industrial	0

City of Goshen

	April		May
Residential	0	Residential	2
Commercial	1	Commercial	0
Industrial	0	Industrial	0

Employment cost index for Dec. 2008 to March Civilian workers

Compensation	+ .3%
Wages/salaries	+ .3%
Benefits	+ .5%

Private industry

Compensation	+ .2%
Wages/salaries	+ .2%
Benefits	+ .2%

Government

Compensation	+ .8%
Wages/salaries	+ .1%
Benefits	+ .5%

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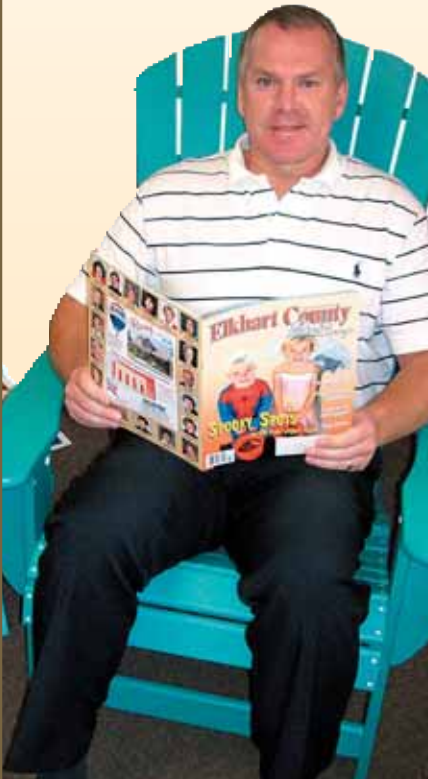
“Elkhart County Living magazine has been a great asset to my business because it targets the audience that my company is looking for as potential customers. I know that people are reading it because 90% of the people who came into my business said they saw our ad in the magazine. My wife and I both really enjoy reading the magazine and our advertising in the magazine has helped to grow our business.”

*Brian Thompson, owner
Beachfront Furniture, Elkhart*

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