



Alternative Energy Improvements May Qualify for DDA Help

It's not only everyday consumers who are concerned about the cost of and reliance on traditional energy sources—it's a concern for business owners as well. So, in order to help local business as well as support greener alternatives, the Delhi DDA has expanded the Commercial Rehabilitation Rebate Program (CRRP) to include alternative energy sources as a qualifying improvement.

Under the new CRRP qualifications, the cost of alternative energy equipment and installation up to \$20,000 is eligible for a 50% rebate (\$10,000). All alternative energy equipment must be located on the exterior of the business in order to qualify for CRRP funding.

If you're not familiar with the CRRP, here's an overview. The CRRP is a DDA program designed to support private investment in, and beautification of, the DDA District. Under the program, the owner of a commercial building may apply for a rebate of 50% of the combined total cost of qualifying improvements to the property—up to a maximum rebate of \$50,000 per commercial property. Many Delhi Township businesses have received CRRP rebates for improvements such as exterior signage, facelifts, parking lot improvement, landscaping, security lighting and alarms, and much more. Only improvements to the exterior of qualifying properties are eligible.

Lyn Weismiller of Holt Auto Alignment, Inc., 2135 Cedar Street, is the first Delhi business owner to take advantage of the new alternative energy rebate eligibility. He is awaiting installation of a small wind turbine which he anticipates will provide up to 10% of his electrical service. Not only will his be the DDA's first CRRP energy rebate, but his wind turbine "will be the first one of its kind in Holt," Lyn says. Lyn is working with Bauer Power of Wayland, Michigan, who also installed the wind turbine at Horrocks.

The application process for alternative energy improvement rebates is the same as the original CRRP. The business owner must submit competitive bids with their application, and the DDA's Beautification Committee must pre-approve the proposed improvements.

For additional details on the CRRP, visit www.delhidda.com, or contact Al McFadyen or Helen Harrison at the Delhi DDA, 699-3866.



Under the new CRRP qualifications, the cost of alternative energy equipment and installation up to \$20,000 is eligible for a 50% rebate.





ABOVE: Eric Luna and his assistant Josh.
LEFT: A few of Eric's custom motorcycle seats.

Luna's Custom Upholstery Sews Up the Competition

"We get to work on a lot of unique stuff," Eric says. One of their recent projects was a truck which went on to win first place at the National Semi Truck Competition.

From the time he was in high school, Eric Luna loved building cars. When he built his first show car, however, he didn't have enough money to finish the interior. So he did it himself—and won Best Interior at a Saginaw car show.

His early success also won him a lot of attention, and Eric has been doing car interior work ever since. He started his business in his garage, then moved to a space in Lansing before coming to Holt more than three years ago.

Eric felt business opportunities would be better for him in Holt, and says that his location right off the highway makes it easy for his out-of-state customers. His specialty is custom automotive interiors, building specialty cars and show cars.

He also does a lot of motorcycle seats and the occasional piece of antique furniture.

"We get to work on a lot of unique stuff," Eric says. One of their recent projects was a truck which went on to win first place at the National Semi Truck Competition.

His shop is about 2,500 square feet, most of it work space with tables and sewing machines, and a small display area to showcase some of his work. Currently Eric has two full-time employees and one half-time.

Because his skill serves a specialty market, Eric says he doesn't have a lot of competition—and that helps keep him busy, despite the current economy. He says that car shows and referrals have been very effective in building his customer base. "We get a lot of people who know me and what I do," Eric says.

He also does a lot of work for small auto dealerships, who come to him with used cars that require minor interior repair before being resold.

Luna's busy season is about to start, and Eric says, "We're working on a lot of cool stuff right now." He adds that anyone is welcome to come in and see the variety and quality of his work.

Luna's Custom Upholstery is at 2460 Cedar St., Holt, 694-4225.

Holt Auto Service & Machine Shop—Offering Full Service

Dave Seehase and his partners—brother Richard, sister Cindy, and brother-in-law Larry Meirndorf—are the third generation to run the family business.

Grandfather Frank began it in 1963, partnering with a service station in Pottersville which provided service work. When Frank's son Dewey (Dave's dad) came on board, they opened the auto parts store in Holt. In time, Holt Auto Supply, Inc., grew to eight independent auto parts stores. When the third generation took the reins, they added the repair facility at the Holt location. Today Holt Auto Service & Machine Shop is a full-service auto repair and preventive maintenance center, as well as a full-service auto machine shop.

In 1978, the partners joined CarQuest, which Dave describes as a marketing banner that allows him to remain independent. Dave explains that CarQuest is unique in their commitment to the repair industry: "They want to take care of the people who repair cars."

Thus CarQuest merchandise meets high standards of quality. "Any part you find in a CarQuest box will be equivalent in form, fit and function to original equipment. It will look, act, and work like the original part on the car."

With much of their business coming from referrals and return customers, the family makes sure their operation maintains its good reputation. "We charge a fair price, and the work is going to be done right," Dave says. "That reputation is very, very important to us."

So is community involvement. "We're not a publicly traded company; everyone who works here lives in the area," Dave says. "We work hard to develop relationships and to make sure we're a hometown, community-bound type of company. That relationship between our store and its community remains a top priority for us."

They also work hard to keep good employees. The seniority of the eight store managers averages about 25 years. "If you get good people, you can always train them to fix cars or sell auto parts," Dave says. "The main concern must be the person you're hiring, not the technical aspect. Someone who is caring, who understands customers' wants and needs—those are the qualities I look for."

The company employs 75 people, including 13 in Holt. Larry is the general manager, Richard buys the stores' merchandise and handles store infrastructure, and Dave oversees the service center and machine shop. He is also the sales manager for the two outside salesmen who call on wholesale accounts for the parts stores.

Holt Auto Service & Machine Shop is at 2423 Cedar Street, 694-2197.

"We work hard to develop relationships and to make sure we're a hometown, community-bound type of company. That relationship between our store and its community remains a top priority for us."



ABOVE: Manager Mike Chase.
BELOW: One of the company's many custom machining devices.



Tacos E Mas... A Delhi Township Original

We've all heard stories about people who turn tough times into opportunity. This is one such story that unfolded right here in Holt.

When Dave Delacruz's Holt-based construction business began slowing down, he headed to Atlanta to find more work. Soon, however, business slowed in Atlanta as well. So Dave came back home to Michigan, where his construction business had ground to a standstill, essentially leaving him, his staff and his family unemployed.

Unemployed, yes, but not without skills and ambition. Since Dave and his wife Tamara both have family in the restaurant business, the idea of starting their own restaurant had potential. And an opportunity soon presented itself.

Mike McNamara, owner of the building at 1850 Cedar Street formerly occupied by Mocha Mac's, was eager to bring a new business into the space and offered Dave a great deal on rent. Dave, of course, was able to do his own repairs and improvements. And thanks to help from people and businesses in the community, the Delacruz family was able to get Tacos E Mas up and running in a matter of weeks. "We all just pitched in," Dave says.

So Tacos E Mas ("Tacos and More") was born. Actually, Dave explains, the correct spelling would be Tacos Y Mas, but he wanted people to be able to pronounce it correctly so he spelled it with an E.

Operating in a very small space, Tacos E Mas is drive-through or delivery only. All the food is homemade, cooked fresh every day, and everything is made to order. That means it takes a little longer than the typical drive-through, but this is not typical drive-through fare. "We wanted to bring quality food into the picture," says Dave.


He uses his mother's original recipes, right down to the specific type of onion, and the extra time they take ensures a quality product. Still, they've worked hard to keep the wait down, and it now averages about two and a half minutes per car.

Tacos E Mas offers eight combo meals—which include chips, salsa and a drink—priced from \$4.99-\$5.49. "We try to keep it really reasonable," says Dave.

So far the only advertising has been word of mouth, but Dave is confident in the quality of their food, and knew it was going to sell as word got around. And it has, with their clientele increasing every week.

Dave and his family moved from Lansing to Holt in 1996 because he wanted his kids to attend Holt Public Schools. His son graduated from Holt High School and he has a daughter at Horizon.

Tacos E Mas is at 1850 Cedar Street, and is open from 11:00 am - 9:00 pm seven days a week. For delivery call 699-8226.



Mike uses his mother's original recipes, right down to the specific type of onion, and the extra time they take ensures a quality product. Still, they've worked hard to keep the wait down, and it now averages about two and a half minutes per car.





Managers Dave and Glinda Starr (upper left) with the entire Craig's staff.

Craig's Auto Body Shop Builds on Satisfied Customers

When you've been with a company from its beginning, you develop a pretty good perspective on its strengths. In Glinda Starr's case, she saw a business she wanted to own.

Glinda has been the manager of Craig's Auto Body for nearly 30 years—and co-owner with her husband Dave since 2002. They know that reputation can make or break an independent small town business, and they work hard to maintain their reputation for quality work.

"We're really good at what we do," Glinda says. "We are family owned and operated, and our motto is honesty, integrity and trust. We try very hard to live up to that."

Glinda and Dave are hands-on owners, in the shop every day helping customers, answering phones, and doing whatever is needed to provide great service. This includes "extras" such as offering their customers free pick-up and delivery, making arrangements for rental cars, and making special appointments after-hours when needed. They also guarantee all their work and their efforts have paid off, as most of their business comes from repeat customers or referrals.

Craig's Auto Body does body and frame work, painting, refinishing, and restoration—and not just on cars. Trucks, buses, motor homes, boats, and even the occasional front door find their way to the shop. Craig's handles the body work on the Ingham County Sheriff's Department vehicles, and for Delhi Township, Michigan State University, and Community Mental Health. They also donated the body and paintwork for the original D.A.R.E. vehicle.

After so many years in Holt, Glinda and Dave are very much a part of the community. They're firm believers in reciprocal business practice—trying to conduct as much of their business within the community as possible. Glinda feels this serves both Craig's and the community well.

Craig's Auto Body is at 2406 Depot Street, Holt, 694-5008, and you can see samples of their work at craigsautobodyshop.com.

After so many years in Holt, Glinda and Dave are very much a part of the community. They're firm believers in reciprocal business practice—trying to conduct as much of their business within the community as possible.





“The community gave me a warm welcome and great support. I absolutely love it here.”

Dr. Novak Rates Holt Area #1

Orthodontist Dr. Catherine Novak put a great deal of thought into where to open her practice—and she couldn't be happier with the decision she made. “The Holt-Dimondale community has been fabulous,” she says. “The kids are great. The parents are great. I will never leave.”

Dr. Catherine grew up in Okemos, earned her undergraduate degree at Michigan State University, and is a graduate of the University of Michigan dental school. After completing her orthodontic specialty at University of Tennessee, she began her career in a group practice. She opened Novak Orthodontics in June, 2006.

The practice is thriving, and Dr. Catherine says the community has a lot to do with that. “I started from ‘zero,’” she says. “The community gave me a warm welcome and great support. I absolutely love it here.”

One of the many advantages of practicing in Holt, says Dr. Catherine, is the half day professional development time on Wednesdays at Holt Junior High and Holt High School. This allows student patients to schedule appointments on Wednesdays without missing school.

Dr. Catherine offers the latest in orthodontic technology, including clear, gold, and self-ligating braces. She also offers Invisalign®, a nearly-invisible system that moves teeth without braces. This form of treatment is particularly appealing to adult patients.

Novak Orthodontics has a friendly, personable atmosphere, and Dr. Catherine makes sure to allot plenty of time to spend with each patient. “I think that makes a big difference to patients,” she says. Dr. Catherine plans to add a second orthodontic assistant in early 2009, and looks forward to “serving the community for the next 30 years.” She welcomes anyone who is interested to stop in, say hello and check out the practice.

Novak Orthodontics is at 2101 North Aurelius Road, Holt, 694-1000.

Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment, Adds Holt Office

A general civil engineering and architectural firm based in southeast Michigan, OHM partners with municipal governments and public agencies “to meet infrastructure development challenges.” To non-engineers, that means projects that improve communities—including everything from sanitary sewer design and storm water management to parks, bike paths and street improvements.

Founded in Detroit 46 years ago, OHM has 165 employees in Michigan and Tennessee. The Holt office, with three full-time staff, was added a year ago.

The firm wanted to do more business in the Lansing area, and after meeting with some of the Delhi Township Board and staff, they felt Holt met their needs for a local base. “Not only did we find Holt to be very friendly, it has good highway access,” says Phil Westmoreland, civil engineer in the Holt office. That's important, because many of the staff from the corporate headquarters in Livonia use the Holt office when they are in the area. OHM is also hoping to be involved in a Holt project soon.

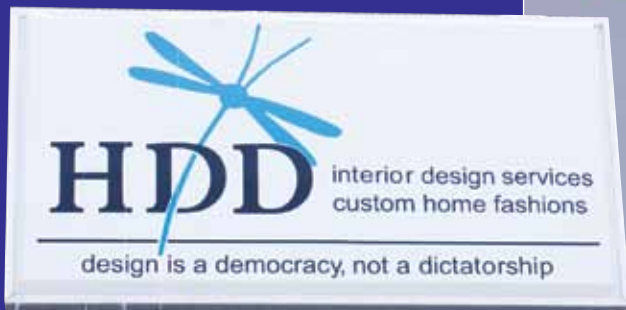
In 2008 the firm was named one of the “Best Civil Engineering Firms to Work For” by *Civil Engineering News*, and they have won Metropolitan Detroit's “101 Best & Brightest Companies to Work For” several years running.

Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment is at 2450 Delbi Commerce Dr., Suite 2, Holt, 699-1610, www.obm-advisors.com.



OHM Mission Statement:

“Helping Build Better Communities for Tomorrow”



Design is a Democracy at Hart-Davidson Designs

HDD is a full-service design studio, working with residential and commercial clients from the midwest to the east coast.



Leslie Hart-Davidson with Chief Executive Dog, "Alice."

Working with an interior designer does not have to be an intimidating experience, believes Hart-Davidson Designs owner Leslie Hart-Davidson. Hence the HDD philosophy: "Design is a democracy, not a dictatorship."

HDD is a full-service design studio, working with residential and commercial clients from the midwest to the east coast. Leslie helps clients "learn how to live better in their homes," working with their individual tastes, needs and goals as opposed to imposing a particular style. "I listen," she says. "Listening and observing are my most important skills." The result is livable, functional, beautiful spaces—and happy clients.

HDD was born in 2000, and had previously operated in Okemos and in Williamston. Leslie had planned to remain in the Williamston space for five years—but in just eleven months, the fast-growing company was bursting at the seams. So, in September 2008, HDD moved to the former Skory building in Holt.

"We're excited to be in Holt," says HDD's business manager, Sarah Ramsey. "We see it as a community that's as ready to grow as we are." She cites the newly-formed Holt Community Arts Council, the DDA's projects, and other "cool things happening here" as signs that Holt is a vibrant community on the move.

Educating and mentoring young designers is extremely important to Leslie, who took advantage of HDD's new large studio space last fall to bring on 19 design interns. Leslie also enjoys educating the general public about design issues, and conducts fun "edutainment" seminars each month. Topics include: Color Coward ("Beige is NOT a color," says Leslie), Decorating Your House without Killing Yourself, and Should I Stay or Should I Go? (making the decision whether to move or remodel). Seminars are offered at the HDD studio as well as various community locations. See HDD's website for a list of upcoming events.

Hart-Davidson Designs is at 2460 Cedar Street, Suite 2, Holt, 517.889.5071, www.designisademocracy.com.



THE DDA – WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) promotes economic development through business attraction/retention programs and works to foster investment within the DDA district. It strives to increase the Township's tax base and strengthen the local economy while maintaining those qualities that make Delhi Township a desirable place to live and work. For more information, visit us at www.DelhiDDA.com.

To contact us: Al McFadyen, Executive Director
 2045 North Cedar Street, Holt, MI 48842
 (517) 699-3866 or (517) 699-3867
Al.McFadyen@delhitownship.com

THE DDA BOARD MEMBERS:

Howard Brighton
 Kim Cosgrove,
Holt Schools Representative, Treasurer
 Stuart Goodrich, *Township Supervisor*
 C. Howard Haas, *Chairman*
 David Leighton
 Nanette Miller
 Jane Olney, *Vice Chairman*
 DiAnne Warfield,
Secretary, Planning Commission Representative

A publication of the Delhi Charter Township Downtown Development Authority • www.DelhiDDA.com

PRSR STD
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Lansing, MI
 Permit #407

OURTOWN

2045 North Cedar Street
 Holt, MI 48842