



OUR TOWN



Dart Development Celebrates 20 Years

Dart Development is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year by breaking ground on a 40,500-square-foot speculative building in Oakwood Executive Park. The park, located off Pine Tree Road and bordering I-96, currently has eleven buildings and more than 350,000 square feet, supporting a variety of businesses. The new building is in Delhi Township, and will offer suites from 10,000 square feet and up. Each suite will include a truck dock, a grade-level door, an office area with two offices, a break room and a conference room.

Dart Development has been building and developing quality, flexible industrial space since 1989. A division of Mason-based Dart Container, it was the only developer in the area to build spec space in 2006, adding 59,000 square feet of space that

reached 70 percent occupancy by June 2007. The park currently boasts a 94 percent occupancy rate.

The new speculative building reflects Dart Development's continued confidence in the region's potential. "Over the last five years, we have added 40 additional acres and well over 200,000 square feet of new space to Oakwood Executive Park," says Marsha Zimmerman, marketing manager of Dart Development. "We also added a new road—Development Drive—which provides better access to the park from both Pine Tree and Dunkel Roads. We are looking forward to continuing to develop new space that meets the needs of today's businesses."

The new building will offer real and personal property tax abatement

opportunities to prospective tenants. "Delhi Township is a committed partner in the promotion of quality development in the Oakwood Executive Park," Delhi Township Supervisor Stuart Goodrich says. "We are excited to provide designation as an Industrial Development District, and hope that eligible companies will take advantage of the tax incentives to grow their business with Dart Development and Delhi Township."

Those who are interested in getting more information on this new building may contact marketing manager Marsha Zimmerman at mzimmerman@dartdevelopment.com or (517) 525-2237.

Happy Birthday, *Our Town!*

Wow, that went fast!

Our Town is five years old this year. Five years of chronicling the growth and development of our community, and introducing you to the interesting people, businesses and organizations that make it happen. It's a pleasure to put each issue together, and even more so to hear that you enjoy reading it. Thanks to all of you for your interest and support. Because, after all, you ARE *Our Town!*



SAVE WITH DELHI DOLLARS DURING HOMETOWN FESTIVAL

Boosting the local economy starts with shopping locally—so here's a little something to encourage you to patronize Delhi businesses!

Simply present this Delhi Dollar coupon when you make a purchase of \$5 or more at a participating business during Hometown Festival. The offer is good between 9 p.m. Friday, August 28th—when the Hometown Festival kicks off with a free family movie—through 10 p.m. Saturday, August 29th, when the festival concludes with a fireworks display.

Don't miss the many, many fun family activities at the Hometown Festival (all free!), and remember to bring your Delhi Dollar and shop in Holt!

delhidollars

Save \$1

when you spend \$5 or more at participating businesses during Hometown Festival!

Present this Delhi Dollar coupon when you make a purchase of \$5 or more (excluding tax) at a participating business between 9 p.m. Friday, August 28 and 10 p.m. Saturday, August 29. Participating businesses are:

- Tacos E Mas
- Discount Glass and Screen
- Sweet Sensations (excludes mobile cart purchases)
- DeRosa's Party Store & Deli
- Johnny Mac's Sporting Goods
- CVS Pharmacy
- Steven L. Marvin Salon & Wellness Spa
- All Winds Musical Instruments
- The Wild Strawberry Florist
- Fat Boys Pizza
- Victory Lane Quick Oil Change
- Ace Hardware
- Bargain Books
- Burger King
- Cottage Inn Pizza
- Edru Skate-A-Rama
- Miller Photography Studios
- Total Firearms

Not valid with any other coupon or offer. No duplicated coupons will be accepted. Limit one coupon per purchase per customer. No cash value.

Meet your DDA board members



Rodger Enos is the newest member of the Delhi Downtown Development Authority board of directors, having joined the board in

January. Already he finds his new role very interesting, and says he is learning a lot about the DDA and its role in the community.

Rodger moved to Holt in 1986 because he had begun his career at LumberTown and wanted to become a part of the Holt community. Originally from Ludington, Rodger found that Holt had a similar "hometown atmosphere" he liked. He raised his daughters here and was active with the schools, both with his daughters' activities and volunteering at sporting events.

Once his daughters were out of school, Rodger says, he wanted to find other ways to volunteer, so he brought LumberTown into the Holt-Dimondale School Business Alliance, and later served as president for two terms. Rodger remains an active member of the Alliance and is also a member of the Holt Rotary Club.

Rodger graduated from Ferris State with a two-year degree in architectural drafting, and holds a BA in building construction management from MSU. He is an estimator in contractor sales at LumberTown, as well as the retail store manager.

"In an independent lumberyard," he says, "there are always a lot of hats to wear." Because of his extensive experience, Rodger hopes to bring to the board a perspective on how developments within the community affect independent business. And, of course, he welcomes the opportunity to network within the community to benefit both Holt and his company.



DDA board member David Leighton founded his broadcast video software/hardware development consulting business,

Leightronix, in 1981, relocated to Michigan in 1983, and eventually settled both his business and family in Holt. "It was a 'no-brainer,'" he says. "In addition to a fantastic community,

Holt offers a proactive approach to local development."

David joined the DDA board in September 2008. As a member of the marketing committee, he is always looking for new ways the DDA can make businesses and residents aware of the opportunities and programs the township and the DDA have to offer. "It's very exciting. I see a real desire among my fellow board and committee members to move things in a positive direction," he says.

David and his wife are active in the schools and the community and raised their children here. Their daughter, a Holt High School graduate, is currently working toward an electrical engineering degree at Michigan Technological University, and their son attends Holt High School.

David has given time and resources to Holt Public Schools, teaching after-school enrichment courses and donating equipment, video editing and DVD duplication in support of a variety of school events and programs. For the past several years, Leightronix has also sponsored the annual Holt Bands Light Show, as well as two Hope Middle School Service Learning Day video events.

ACE—Holt's hometown hardware

At ACE Hardware, the secret to success is offering the right item, at a competitive price, with the service to go along with it, says store manager Mark Guy. "At ACE, the customers are not only getting a trusted name in hardware, they are also getting what we like to call 'legendary customer service.'"

For about 20 years now, ACE Hardware in Holt has worked to give customers exactly what the chain's founders envisioned. "The ACE brand was started by a group of hardware dealers who decided they wanted to buy better products together, at a cheaper price, so they could better serve their customers," Mark says. "Although ACE is a corporation, our store, like each of the others, is independently owned."

Mark believes one of the reasons his store has been so successful is because of the inventory. "We try to keep in stock everything a customer might need for any kind of project. Not only will we have it in stock, but it will be competitively priced."

Most of the customers at ACE in Holt are regulars who have shopped there for years. "We know most of our customers by name," says Mark, "so they feel at home when they walk in the door." But he is confident that even if it's someone's first visit to the store, they'll be back because of the exceptional customer service.



who knows how to do the projects." And they'll follow through until the project is completed, too. "If it requires one of us talking a customer through a project step-by-step on the phone, then that is what we do. You will never have to go looking for someone who knows what they are talking about at ACE."

Mark feels that having a hometown hardware store in a community like Holt has only helped the business thrive. So, he believes, it's important to give back. "We like to do what we can to support different community groups and the schools," he says. "We are thankful that our community has been so loyal to their hometown hardware."

ACE Hardware of Holt is at 1960 Cedar Street, 694-3575.



That service includes a staff with life experience in fixing things. "We try to help our customers save money by fixing things themselves," Mark says. "We always have an employee in the store

Music in the Gardens

Once again this summer, Veterans Memorial Gardens will be filled with music. The Holt Community Arts Council is proud to bring you a series of free, family-friendly concerts in the Gardens. Don't miss out on this wonderful summer entertainment!



Jack Clarkson Band

Thur., July 30, 2009
at 7:00 p.m.

*Variety mix of Cajun, classic country
and Texas swing.*

YellowSub Marines

Michigan's premier Beatles'
tribute band
Thur., August 6, 2009
at 7:00 p.m.

(gates open at 5:00 p.m. for a
community cookout fundraiser for the
Arts Council)

*Dressed in either their black suits or Sgt.
Pepper garb, the YellowSub Marines
perform with the passion of the Beatles'
early days.*

Stage 1210 Acoustic Showcase

Thur., August 13, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.
*A production of the successful "Stage
1210" Acoustic Showcases featuring
singers and songwriters from the Lansing
area and around the state.*



A.I.M.

COMMUNITY RESIDENTS INSURING OUR COMMUNITY

Steve Anderson and Jessica Nance of Advanced Insurance Marketers (A.I.M.) are a father and daughter who have made it their business to protect the community. An independent insurance agent for 38 years, Steve began the company 15 years ago and serves both the personal and small-group business insurance markets.

“The basic principle of insurance is that you pay a little bit of money so if something bad happens, you can get a lot of money to help fix things,” Steve says. “We feel really good about what we do.”

They work hard at customer service—and, because Steve lives just three doors away from his business, he is always available to his clients. “We don’t make people fit into our schedules, we work hard at making sure we can easily fit into theirs,” he says. “We do things like stopping by the office on the weekends, just in case someone has left a message for a claim, and making our cell phone numbers available to our clients, because you can’t predict when a disaster might happen.”

Because they live as well as work here, Steve and Jessica know the community and its people. “We are very community-focused, and we try to take care of the families in the community,” Steve says. They also believe in supporting the community by shopping locally. “It’s important

to us to support our neighboring businesses so the local economy continues to grow.”

They also have something in common with most of their clientele. “We are just like most of the small family-owned businesses we work to protect. We know exactly what their concerns are and can better help to address them,” Steve says.

The agency has four employees, all of whom are trained to help clients with any type of insurance, but each also has an area of expertise. “I specialize in health and lifestyle,” Jessica says, “and my father specializes in commercial insurance, but the whole office can do everything.”

A.I.M. plans to be a part of the community for years to come. “In my experience,” Steve says, “agents who don’t really care about protecting their clientele don’t last. Because we’ve continued to prove that we genuinely care, we’ve also proven to have staying power.”

Advanced Insurance Marketers is at 1969 Cedar Street, Holt, 694-0467, info@aimins.com.



Superior Saw

SALES AND SERVICE FOR THE ARBORIST



The condensed description of his business, says Brian Cady, is that Superior Saw sells and services “anything that has to do with trees, tree removal or even burning.” More specifically, Superior Saw caters to both the consumer and professional markets, carrying arborist supplies such as climbing tools, logging tools, brush cutters, loppers, blowers—and, of course, chain saws—as well as wood stoves, fireplaces and wood furnaces.

Brian learned his business while working for his dad, Jack Cady, who owned Brady Lawn Equipment until the early 1990s. Brian continued to work with the new owners until 2001, when he built Superior Saw next door and became a STIHL dealer. Brian’s affinity for STIHL has its roots in Jack. “Dad always considered the STIHL line his pride and joy,” Brian says. Superior Saw is now a STIHL Elite Dealer, with STIHL their main arborist product line.

Brian’s customer base comprises approximately half homeowners and half municipalities and public agencies, including Lansing Board of Water & Light, Delhi Township, MSU, City of Lansing and Ingham County Road Commission. It’s a mix that works well, because, as Brian explains, “We don’t have just one customer that represents a large portion of our sales; we have thousands of customers.” Business has increased every year, and Brian believes they’ll continue to gain market share. “I concentrate on slow growth and not getting out of control.”

Brian credits his four employees with being efficient and able to handle a variety of job duties. “They all do everything,” he says. “I think every aspect of the business helps other aspects.” And, he explains, it allows him to keep all his employees working full time year-round.

Wood stoves—including Napoleon, Jøtul and Mørso—are a recent addition to Superior Saw’s product line, and they’re selling well simply from foot traffic and word of mouth. While he is not the largest distributor in the area, Brian anticipates his market share will expand because they’ve focused on one fuel source—wood.



When Brian first built, he was advised, “Build the biggest building you can on the lot you have, and trust me, you’ll use it.” He has—and he’s now applying to build a small addition. He’s also interested in the Commercial Rehabilitation Rebate Program (CRRP) and hopes to take advantage of it for some exterior improvements in the future. But business is good, Brian is busy, and for now, a building facelift will have to wait. Still, he believes CRRP is a valuable program. “Beautifying businesses will give people a reason to come through here, and that should be good for everyone.”

Superior Saw is at 1334 North Cedar, Mason, 694-7224.

Edru keeps on rolling

Like the original wood on the oval rink and the chairs that encircle it, Edru Skate-a-Rama's original mission—to provide a fun, safe place for families and friends to spend time together—has lasted 53 years and counting.



Edru, named after the original owners, Ed and Ruth Corr, was built in 1956. And because of its longevity, it's a place several generations within a family may have visited.

"A lot of parents or grandparents come in to drop off their kids, and tell us they used to skate here themselves," says Dave Jackson, who has owned the rink for eight years. "I've even heard people say that this is where they met their husband or wife. Experiences like that have given the place a lot of character and history."

Even the animals that have been poised on top of the building for years have a story. The resident giraffe, gorilla, turtle, elephant and zebra were moved onto the roof after their former home—the putt-putt course next door—closed. After purchasing Edru, Dave briefly considered removing the animals. Then his daughter visited the rink and couldn't keep her eyes off them. "The first thing she said was, 'Aw, Dad, the animals are great,' and that settled it."

"Everyone seems to know us by those animals on the roof," adds Kristi Lewis, the rink's marketing coordinator. "I think they're a part of what has made Edru such a staple in this community."

Although Edru holds special memories of times past, many new memories continue to be made there. "We average 250 birthday parties

each year," says Dave, "and Edru has even hosted a wedding." In order to make birthday parties as stress-free for parents as possible, Edru handles all the details, including setup, cleanup, food, decorations and entertainment.



Dave says the Holt area is a great place to run a family-friendly business. "We've always wanted to create a safe, fun environment where kids and their families can come and have a great evening," he says. "We pride ourselves on being a place where parents can drop their children off and know that they will be properly supervised."

Dave emphasizes that Edru is economical entertainment, too. "For just five dollars a person, families can have a great time together and get a great workout, too," he says. "We've also become more than just a skating rink by offering an arcade with a prize window, a snack bar and laser tag."

By keeping focused on the same principles that have kept Edru in business for all these years, Dave looks forward to having generations of families flowing in and out of the rink's doors for years to come.

Edru Skate-a-Rama is at 1891 North Cedar Street, Holt, 699-2438.

Free family movies

It's a great way to spend a summer evening with the family! Free, family-friendly outdoor movies return on Friday nights in August, sponsored by the Holt Community Arts Council and the Delhi Township Parks & Recreation Department.

August 7 - **Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory**

At dark in the Veterans Memorial Gardens Amphitheatre

August 14 - **Babe**

At dark in the Veterans Memorial Gardens Amphitheatre

August 21 - **WALL-E**

At dark in the Veterans Memorial Gardens Amphitheatre

August 28 - **Fireproof**

Movie is at 9 p.m. (Behind Holt Jr. High School/Sycamore Elementary) under the entertainment tent during the Holt Hometown Festival.



SSBBank

MORE THAN A CENTURY OF SERVICE



SSBBank, now more than 101 years old, operates under the motto, “Hometown banking the way it used to be,” according to president Ron Soule. “We believe the best way to provide great customer service is to have hometown people serving their local communities.”

Founded in Stockbridge in 1908, SSBBank expanded to the Holt area in 2004 and relocated the Holt branch in 2007. “We moved our location farther down Cedar Street to make it easier for our customers to enter and exit the building,” Ron says.

That focus on customers and customer service has helped SSBBank earn The Community News’ “Best Bank in Holt” award two years in a row. “We were not given this award because we are the biggest or the nicest-looking bank, but because of the way we treat the people who come into our business,” Ron says. “We take pride in our friendliness, and receiving this award is just an indication that we are doing something right.”

“We take the time to get to know all our customers beyond their account number or name,” says Crystal Heinz, the Holt/South Lansing branch manager. “Often, we know things that are going on in their lives; for instance, if someone’s daughter is getting married, we can help them plan financially for that occasion.”

Crystal adds that the staff at SSBBank is cross-trained to handle all types of transactions. “When a customer

comes in, they don’t end up waiting while a task is passed from employee to employee. We save our customers time by being more efficient,” she says. It all goes back to the bank’s original motto of hometown banking. “We are an independent community bank,” Ron says. “This means that all of the decisions for the bank are made locally. There is no outside corporate board that makes any final decisions.” He adds that the bank also demonstrates its commitment to the community by investing in loans to local businesses and residents.

SSBBank participates in a variety of charitable activities to help the community thrive, including the Holt Hometown Festival, and helping local churches by providing them with checking accounts that pay a substantial amount of interest. “We want to be a part of things and help our neighbors in the community,” says Ron. “We feel it’s just a part of being a good corporate citizen.”

The bank is currently building a drive-through window expansion, which will be completed by the end of August. The bank also plans to become more environmentally friendly by shifting from paper to computer reports, and introducing e-statements, so customers can opt out of monthly statements and be able to check their accounts online. “We are forward-looking, constantly adding new products and improving old ones,” Ron says. “Even after 101 years, our goal is to provide the needed financial services to customers in the 21st century.”

SSBBank is at 1943 North Cedar Street, 694-6000.

Holt Auto Clinic

It was July 1974. Holt Auto Clinic opened, and young Dave Rothermel started working there as a mechanic. “And pretty soon,” he says, “I owned the place.”

Okay, maybe it wasn’t quite that simple. But Dave, a car lover who has “built, bought and collected them since I was 12 years old,” was soon building race engines for his new boss. One thing led to another, and in 1980, Dave and his wife, Linda, bought the business.

“It’s a mom and pop shop,” Dave says, with two mechanics completing the staff. Holt Auto Clinic does general auto repair, most of it on domestic cars in recent years as his customers’ needs have shifted. Nonetheless, says Dave, “I’m the crazy guy who will work on Jags and Benzes, too.”

Holt Auto Clinic repairs everything except automatic transmissions, simply because of space limitations, and one of its specialties is electronics. “That’s something a lot of other shops haven’t kept up on,” Dave says. “Other shops will bring a car in and we’ll burn a computer for it, reprogram it or whatever is needed.”

There’s a lot of cooperation among the local auto shops, Dave adds. “We all talk and share ideas.” And if his shop can’t provide a service, he’s happy to recommend another quality shop.

Dave notes that local business tends to evolve with what the community wants and needs. Hence, he is customer-focused. “We take good care of our customers,” he says. “We’re proud of the service we provide. Once we earn a customer’s trust, they’ll keep coming back.” That they do. Dave says the clinic is now working on cars for third-generation customers. That’s one of the reasons Dave loves living in the community where he does business. “We’re good at what we do, and we really enjoy serving the community. We consider most of them friends, and they consider us friends.”

Dave has taught automotive electronics at Lansing Community College for 15 years. He chairs the advisory board for the technology programs at LCC, and sits on the board of regents of the Automotive Service Association. Dave and Linda have raised three children here and support the local businesses and school teams. “We just like people. That’s why we’re here.”

Holt Auto Clinic is at 2040 Cedar Street, 694-8519.





Hayhoe Asphalt Paving

SMOOTHING THE WAY FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS

People who think “customer service isn’t what it used to be” probably haven’t worked with Hayhoe Asphalt Paving. “Since the very beginning, one of the core tenets of our company has been that the owner supervises all asphalt projects from start to finish,” says John Hayhoe, whose father, Lloyd, started the company in 1968. And if the business’s continuing success is any indicator, it’s a philosophy their customers appreciate.

“We experience growth every year,” John says, adding that they could grow more quickly, but prefer to focus on maintaining the standards of service and quality that have made them successful. John’s daughter Amanda, now a partner in the business, adds, “We want to remain a family business and give that ‘family service.’ We want to make sure it’s Dad and me meeting with the customers, and it’s Dad

operating the paver on their jobs.” Hayhoe’s business comes solely from referral and word of mouth—in fact, the company doesn’t even have signs on their buildings. It’s a personal way of doing business that John enjoys. “I get along with the customers so well, most of the time we just work on a handshake,” he says.

Paving is a seasonal business here in Michigan, running roughly from April to November. But with an average of 700-800 customers each season, 90-hour work weeks are not unusual for Hayhoe’s 10-person staff.

Hayhoe Asphalt Paving is the oldest continuously-owned asphalt paving company in the mid-Michigan area, and now includes three generations of the Hayhoe family. John began working for his dad at age 16, and continued while earning his bachelor’s degree

from Michigan State University. John’s wife, Gail, retired from the company this year, but son Michael works on the paving crew and does seal coating. Amanda, who studied business at Western Michigan and Michigan State, has learned all aspects of the business, handling customer relations, sales, employee supervision and all the office work—and, in the off-season, still works with her dad on patching.

As a local business owner and lifelong Delhi resident, John is committed to the community. He has been active with the Holt Jaycees and Holt Kiwanis Club, and enjoys serving as a Township trustee. This past March, John was also honored as the Holt Education Foundation’s Volunteer of the Year.

Hayhoe Asphalt Paving is at 1165 North Cedar Street, Mason, 694-9033.

Vec Engineering

Vec Engineering was created 10 years ago by president and owner Tom Krasovec, who wanted to provide great engineering services at a reasonable price. The company handles civil, structural, geotechnical and environmental engineering projects. “This includes everything from structural restoration to keep a building safe, to simple subdivision design, to environmental cleanup,” says Tom, who has been an engineer for 25 years.

list of clients who have been with the company since we opened,” he says. “We continue to meet their expectations by being creative in our designs and the way that we approach different projects.”

Even at the beginning of a project, Tom is always looking ahead to make sure there isn’t something his company could be doing to make a client happier with the end result. “We strive to make sure they are happy with the end product in all cases,” he says. “With a little ingenuity, we always figure out how to make things work, anywhere, while meeting all of our customers’ needs on a project.”

Tom believes his experienced staff helps him keep a step ahead of other engineering companies. “We basically maintain a senior staff with at least 15 years of experience each,” he says. “Vec Engineering is also unequalled in keeping our projects on time and on budget.”

Often the projects that bring Tom the biggest sense of accomplishment are those that improve a community through the cleanup of



unusable industrial or commercial sites and foreclosed properties. “We go through all the environmental rules and regulations to get things cleaned up so that it can be resold as a reliable, functional property,” he says.

“We often get entire sites that are in a terrible, hazardous condition. I get a lot of pride from taking the risks and hazards out of the sites and making them both beautiful and functional again so that they can become a taxable property for the community.”

Tom’s vision for Vec’s future includes hiring more engineers so it can take on even more projects. “Although we are looking to grow, we have no yearning to be a giant firm,” he says. “We’d just like to have about 20 to 25 engineers at some point.”

Vec Engineering is at 4625 Willoughby Rd., #6, Holt, 699-0774.



Although Vec does a lot of business in the local area, the company also has projects and clients throughout the United States. “We chose

Delhi Township for our headquarters because of how close it was to all of the highways, which is convenient for us and our clients,” Tom says. “We also do a lot of work with Michigan State University, so it was important to be close to them.”

Tom feels that his company’s reputation for great service that saves his clients money is what keeps customers coming back. “We have a great



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
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THE DDA BOARD MEMBERS:

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