



HRU adapts, thrives in changing economy

When your firm places contingent employees in the automotive industry and that industry undergoes dramatic downsizing, what do you do? At HRU Technical Resources, they knew their company had to adapt in order to survive. So adapt it did—and just completed the two strongest revenue years in its 30-year history.

HRU places talented contingent (non-permanent) employees in engineering, IT and technically-related positions across a variety of industries—including the federal government, higher education, consumer products, defense, food and beverage and pharmaceuticals. Where the automotive industry comprised 100 percent of HRU’s business for the company’s first 20 years, it now represents approximately five percent.

The common denominator—and what enabled HRU to adapt—is manufacturing, explained Business Development Manager Todd Briggs.

“Virtually everything we use every day is manufactured,” he said, “so we looked to other manufacturing industries that used the same skill sets as automotive.” The need for specialized talent—including engineering, robotics, machinery and, increasingly, IT—is growing, and that presents great opportunities for both HRU and the workers they place.

HRU places both contract employees (hired by HRU to work onsite at the client company) and direct hires (employed directly by the client firm). In the current economy, some employers are still a little hesitant

about increasing their workforce through direct hires, said Tim Sackett, Executive Vice President. So, he explained, “Contract employees serve as a bridge to permanent hiring.” Contracts also help eliminate uncertainty for the worker.

“For example, when we can tell them we have about a year’s work for them, it helps them plan.”

HRU finds its talented workers in a number of ways: Internet employment sites such as Monster.com, personal networking, and, of course, their own data base of “alumni” and contacts. “After 30 years in business, we have a pretty good data base,” said Todd. “As the saying goes, ‘everybody knows somebody else who does what they do’.”

In November, HRU was honored by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce for “significant contributions to our region’s growth.” Tim and Todd believe that the company’s way of doing business has helped HRU become as successful as it is today.

“We ingrain ourselves as a partner with our clients—not just a vendor,” Todd said. Tim added, “I always say that I want to do business with people I could go to a basketball game or dinner with and have a good non-work-related conversation.”

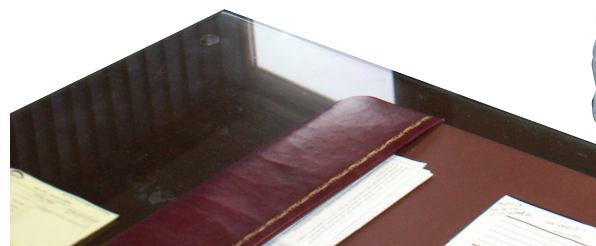
Perhaps not surprisingly, Tim and Todd love finding people employment.

Whenever possible, their goal is to keep talented workers here in Michigan, but HRU also places nationwide. “When people need work, the priority is to help them find it,” said Todd. HRU currently has more than 400 contract employees, and more than 50 staff members in their Delhi Township office.

HRU Technical Resources is at 3451 Dunckel Road, #200, Lansing, 727.5888, www.hru-tech.com.

At HRU Technical Resources, they knew their company had to adapt in order to survive. So adapt it did—and just completed the two strongest revenue years in its 30-year history.

Tim Sackett
Executive Vice President
HRU



OUR TOWN



Looking ahead: Holt Farmers' Market 2011

Believe it or not, summer will return—and, with it, the taste treats to be found at the Holt Farmers' Market. So as we look forward to another great season at the Market, here are some updates from manager Chuck Grinnell:

"Cottage Kitchen" legislation opens doors to potential vendors

Last summer, the state legislature removed the requirement that prepared foods sold at farmers' markets—such as baked goods, jams, salsas, etc.—be prepared in a state-certified kitchen. The "cottage kitchen" legislation opens the door to those smaller operations who wish to sell their goods at farmers' markets.

"Getting a state-certified kitchen is no small matter," said Chuck. "It was a huge barrier for many potential vendors." He added that he saw an immediate impact after the legislation passed, with new vendors coming into the Holt market later in the season. The law now simply requires a complete listing of ingredients—in descending order from the largest ingredient amount to the smallest—on the packaging. If you are interested in becoming a vendor, or would like additional information on the cottage kitchen legislation, please contact Chuck (see contact information at the end of this article).

Volunteers needed!

Here's your opportunity to see people, pick up some great products, have fun and help out the Holt Farmers' Market! Chuck is always in need of volunteers to help at the Market, and the more the merrier. No training or special skills needed—just a few extra hours and a desire to lend a hand. You can make it a regular or occasional thing. If you're interested, or know someone who might be, please contact Chuck at the number below.

Contact Holt Farmers' Market manager Chuck Grinnell at 231.734.3289 (home) or 517.930.2655 (cell), or visit www.holtfarmersmarket.org.

Chuck is always in need of volunteers to help at the Market, and the more the merrier!

Business Expo draws more than 500 visitors

The Business Expo is designed to connect local consumers with a wide variety of goods and services.



They say "the third time's the charm," but the second time turned out to be very impressive indeed.

The second annual Delhi Business Expo in October was a tremendous success, with more than 65 local businesses and more than 500 guests participating. The Expo is designed to connect local consumers with the wide variety of goods and services available from our Delhi Township businesses. Door prizes and vendor giveaways—ranging from food to discounts to product samples—added to the evening's fun, which ended with the grand prize drawing for a 42" flat screen TV.

"We'll definitely do this again next year," promised Expo organizer Chuck Grinnell. "We will build on the great things at this year's Expo in order to make this event an annual highlight in Holt."

The DDA was a major sponsor for the Expo, and expressed gratitude for the partnership with Holt Schools and the Holt Alliance. "Along with Chuck Grinnell's hard work, this partnership ensured the success of the event," said Al McFadyen, Executive Director of the DDA. "The DDA also thanks all the vendors who invested their time and resources into making the Expo a wonderful evening for everyone."

A voice heard around the world...from a basement in Holt!

Bob Olson Voiceovers

Bob Olson might not have been born knowing he wanted to make his living behind a microphone, but it didn't take him long to figure it out. "I was six years old when I told my mom I wanted to be a DJ," he said.

Unlike most childhood career aspirations, Bob's stayed with him. He graduated from Specs Howard School of Broadcasting (now known as Specs Howard School of Media Arts) in Southfield and spent 18 years as a DJ, most of those at Lansing-area station Q106.

But careers have a way of evolving. Bob is now an independent voiceover artist—a profession that requires not just a "good voice," but acting skill as well. For Bob, it began as a sideline. "It started around '97 when the Internet was all dial-up," he said. "A guy I knew wanted me to do voiceovers, and would send me two or three spots a day to record." Bob's initial home studio setup cost about \$1,500, he said, which at the time seemed a huge—and scary—investment. But the leap of faith paid off.

"It just kept growing and growing," Bob said. "I made the right decision."

Within a relatively short time, Bob was earning more from his voice work than from his day job. By 2006, he was doing voiceovers full time—still operating from his basement studio, albeit with much better equipment! Thanks to "the magic of the Internet," Bob can record, produce and deliver a spot for a client just about anywhere in the world, most often within a few hours.

All of which is not to say it's easy. Bob said his best advice to those who want to get into the voiceover business is, "Start about 10 years ago!"

Chances are you've heard Bob's voice without realizing it. He's recorded hundreds upon hundreds of radio and TV commercials nation- and worldwide, as well as corporate narrations, e-learning courses and "just about anything that requires a voice." You may hear him keeping you company "on hold," or announcing the day's events in the Disney stores throughout the U.S.

Even after years of racking up impressive credentials, Bob still gets a thrill from doing what he does. "In radio they say you get to be somebody you're not," he said. "But I get to be a different person every 30 seconds." Bob is amazed by "the people I get to work with and the things I get to do, all from my basement in Holt!"

That includes a fun and unusual project currently in the works. Bob has been cast in "*Bloodline Confidential*," an old-time radio drama that will air nationwide.

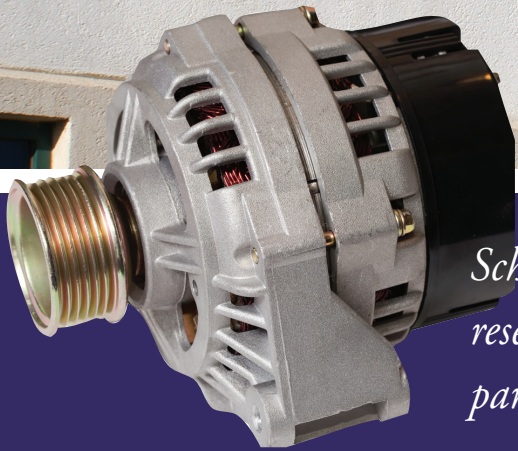
"I'll be doing it with some big-time voices," he said. But Bob is clearly in the ranks of big-time voices himself.

Bob Olson Voiceovers can be reached at 394.3905, or www.BobsVoice.net.

Chances are you've heard Bob's voice without realizing it. He's recorded hundreds upon hundreds of radio and TV commercials nation- and worldwide, as well as corporate narrations, e-learning courses and "just about anything that requires a voice."



Bob Olson



Schram Auto & Truck Parts buys salvage vehicles at auction and resells virtually every usable part—from door handles to engine parts to entire front ends—to dealerships and repair shops.

Some of us recycle things like newspapers and plastic. At Schram Auto & Truck Parts, they recycle entire vehicles.

“If there wasn’t a place for ‘end of life’ vehicles,” said Sarah Pilter, a fourth generation employee of her family’s business, “the earth would be overpopulated with junk vehicles.” Schram, she said, provides a clean, reliable means of re-use and disposal.

Schram Auto & Truck Parts buys salvage vehicles at auction and resells virtually every usable part—from door handles to engine parts to entire front ends—to dealerships and repair shops. So, should you happen to wipe out the side mirror of your 1985 Cutlass Ciera, chances are it can be replaced. But the business involves a lot more than just harvesting pieces and parts.

“Our vehicles go through a ‘green’ process that is state-of-the-art,” Sarah said. “All fluids are drained before the car sits on the lot so the fluids don’t get into the ground.” Schram

recycles the gasoline, antifreeze and washer fluid from each vehicle. Oil from vehicles is used in an oil burner that heats Schram’s building. Schram is a member of the Automotive Recyclers Association (ARA), Automotive Recyclers of Michigan (ARM), the Vehicle Recycling Group (VRG), and has earned the ARA’s Gold Seal certification.

Schram Auto & Truck Parts was founded in Waterford in 1923, and the family is still operating there today. They expanded to Delhi Township in 1999 when Sarah’s grandfather purchased the former Bud’s Auto Parts. The Holt location offered Schram the opportunity to expand and more easily serve the middle of the state—“But,” Sarah noted, “We’ll deliver to our customers as far as the Mackinac bridge.”

Ninety-five percent of Schram’s sales are business-to-business, Sarah said. However, about a year ago they opened a “you-pull-it” self-serve yard here. That means exactly what it sounds like: customers bring their own tools

and pull the parts they need from the cars on the lot, saving on labor costs.

Schram employs approximately 100 people between their two operations, almost 50 of whom work at the Delhi Township shop.

Schram Auto Parts is at 1325 N. Cedar, Mason, 694-2154, www.schramauto.com.





Snap Fitness: A different kind of fitness model



Joe Garcia, owner.

“I want to provide a ‘point of entry’ into fitness that is fast, convenient and affordable... a neighborhood, family gym,” where people won’t be intimidated by the price, the surroundings or an intensely competitive atmosphere.

Long before it was his profession, fitness was a passion for local Snap Fitness owner Joe Garcia. A runner and marathoner, Joe long ago embraced a healthy lifestyle, “because I had to.” With a family history of diabetes, Joe was motivated to do whatever he could to stay healthy, set a good example for his young children, and “to make sure I’m around for them.” So when he decided to open his own health club, he did so with a desire to help others work toward healthier lives—especially those who are new to fitness.

“I want to provide a ‘point of entry’ into fitness that is fast, convenient and affordable,” Joe said. “A neighborhood, family gym,” where people won’t be intimidated by the price, the surroundings or an intensely competitive atmosphere.

Snap Fitness—which opened in the Holt Plaza in December—fits that model.

Joe described it as a place where you can get in and out fast but still get a quality workout with top-shelf cardio and strength training equipment. “We offer the same great workout experience as the large, fancy clubs, but at a fraction of the price,” he said. Unlike some clubs, where the membership investment can be intimidating, Snap Fitness offers the option of month-by-month membership.

Another Snap advantage is 24/7 member access, which helps people work fitness into their busy lives at their convenience—whenever and wherever that may be. Each member is provided a personalized keycard, allowing easy access, even during unstaffed hours, to any of the more than 1,000 Snap Fitness Clubs worldwide.

Most of all, Joe said, he wants his club to be a place where people can succeed in bringing more fitness into their lives at a level that’s comfortable for them. And he and his staff want to support them in that effort. “I’m a guy who likes to solve problems and bring value,” he said. “I want this to be the kind of place where we know our members by name and can cheer them on.”

Snap Fitness also offers support through a free fitness assessment, free instruction and a customized workout plan. Each member can also access a personalized online training center where they can create, modify and track their workouts. There’s even an online nutrition and meal planning program that recommends daily caloric intake and menus based on personal goals and preferences.

In the end, Joe said, he’s excited to bring to the community a concept that makes sense and can benefit so many. “I want to help people manage their effort to be healthy.”

Snap Fitness is at 2040 N. Aurelius Road in the Holt Plaza, 827.4884, www.snapfitness.com/holtmi.



“It’s an outstanding program.”

CRRP helps business owners improve properties

“It’s really a good way to fix up a community.”

So said Holt businessman Roger Dean, who has had considerable experience with the DDA’s Commercial Rehabilitation Rebate Program (CRRP). Roger has taken advantage of the CRRP to improve property he owns on Depot Street.

The CRRP provides grants to businesses to update existing structures within the DDA business district. Eligible improvements up to \$100,000 of owner-paid costs can be reimbursed to a maximum of 50 percent, or \$50,000 for each commercial parcel. Eligible improvements may include such things as facades, landscaping, parking lots, signage and more. Thanks to the CRRP, property owners and tenants can enjoy many long-term financial and esthetic benefits.

“It’s an outstanding program,” Roger said. “When you fix up businesses in a community, it’s good for everyone.”

Karl Griffin of the Dart Development Group agrees. He has also taken advantage of the CRRP for multiple projects over the past four years, and said the financial benefits have allowed the company to move forward with improvement projects faster than they otherwise might have.

“It’s a real simple process,” he added. “The forms are available online; it couldn’t be easier. And the experience of working with the DDA has been fantastic.”

Whether you are a property owner or tenant, the CRRP is a unique opportunity for you to modernize, upgrade or otherwise improve the appearance of your building at a significant cost savings.

For more information on the CRRP, including a list of eligible improvements and a downloadable application, visit delhidda.com, or contact Helen Harrison at the DDA, 699.3866.

Holiday TV
package
wrapped up
beautifully



Nearly 50 Delhi Township businesses took advantage of the cooperative TV advertising package offered by the DDA this past holiday season.

“The Holt businesses are awesome,” said Fox 47 representative Don Garchow. “I love working with these guys.”

Airing on WSYM Fox 47 from early November through December 20, the campaign was designed to provide local businesses an affordable way to advertise, while also generating more awareness of the Delhi business community as a whole. The DDA underwrote half the cost of the program.

Z. Bear Diapers - Eco-friendly baby care!

Z. Bear sells eco-friendly cloth diapers and other products designed to support natural baby care.

Stephanie White is passionate about babies and about the environment. So her business, Z. Bear Diapers, seems a classic example of the adage, “Do what you love.” Z. Bear sells eco-friendly cloth diapers and other products designed to support natural baby care.

“Cloth diapering is a great business for a stay-at-home mom,” said Stephanie, who began Z. Diapers as an online business about four and a half years ago.

She had just gotten her business license when she and her husband, Joe, found out they were expecting their second child.

“Not much happened with the business that year,” she said with a laugh. “I mostly concentrated on setting up my website and just learning how to *be* in business.” But no one could dispute her commitment: at the time she went into labor, she was also awaiting another delivery—from FedEx. The FedEx truck arrived just as she and her husband were leaving for the birthing center, and she took the shipment with her so she could fill her customer’s order en route!

Z. Bear Diapers is now entering its fifth year, and, Stephanie said, “It just keeps on growing.” She noted that consumers are becoming increasingly

conscious of “green” products and practices, as well as the cost savings cloth diapers offer over disposables. Although cloth diapering has a higher startup cost—especially for first-time parents who don’t have hand-me-downs from previous babies—Stephanie estimated that the average savings from birth to the time the child is out of diapers is between \$1,200-2,000.

About a year and a half ago, Z. Bear Diapers outgrew Stephanie’s home storage space. She and Joe found a space that would fill the need for additional storage and also accommodate a small showroom, and the next phase of Z. Bear began.

“There’s so much information online about cloth diapering, it can get really overwhelming really fast,” she said. “I wanted to be a local resource so parents can come in and see firsthand the different options that are available.”

Stephanie also does cloth diapering consultations at the store, and local customers can pick up orders there as well. She estimates that 85-90 percent of her business is local. “That’s what I love,” she said.

Z. Bear Diapers is at 1795 Cedar Street, Suite G (turn left off Charlar Drive), 699.0359, www.zbeardiapers.com.

Stephanie White with daughter Colleen.



OURTOWN

2045 North Cedar Street
Holt, MI 48842

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

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