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BUSINESS MATTERS

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Coffee, Tea or Heat Pump ?

What began as “a crazy marketing idea for Watkins Mechanical Solutions” has percolated into a strong marketing tool and more.

At Jump Start Java, 10 Parker Dr., you can sip a cup of coffee, enjoy a pastry and check out the latest innovations in heating and air conditioning systems.

It’s a low-key, unique approach engineered by Lisa Watkins after her husband Randy met a Florida dealer who had increased his closing rate from 35 percent to 80 percent. He did it by opening a showroom and giving customers a hands-on look at what they were getting for their investment.

That made sense and when Watkins Mechanical moved to Parker Drive the idea of a showroom took root. “We had a decorator help us, but what was going to be show room really ended up looking like a coffee shop,” says Lisa.

That led to offering coffee and pastries to potential customers. A trip to Seattle, the county’s hot spot for coffee cafes, led to Jump Start Java. “So, when customers come in for coffee, they often look over the equipment and ask questions about it,” she says. Jump Start Java has become a conversation starter—with good taste.



Lisa Watkins serves up java while husband Randy services heating and cooling systems.

Today, Jump Start also offers artwork from selected artisans. Paintings, sculpture and jewelry dominate the displays. It’s an area she is exploring and will likely expand based on increased interest from customers.

The Watkins family owns and operates both Jump Start Java and Watkins Mechanical. Jump Start is open from 6 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, call 748-0220.

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FALL 2007

VOLUME 3

Advanced Engineering Set to Break Ground on New Building

While the tool and die industry struggles nationwide, Advanced Engineering Solutions at 250 Advanced Dr. (off Sharts Road), continues expanding.

That makes Scott Paulson, Vice President of Operations, a happy and sometimes hurried man.

Some “operations” take Scott to the factory floor. Others take him across the road to the future site of an 83,000-square-foot facility AES will build as it enters into another expansion mode. He expects operations to begin in the new building in about nine months and anticipates operating two shifts with about 120 employees per shift.

For almost two years, another operation has taken him across the world to Vietnam, where AES will open a plant. “We expect to be in production there next summer. The Vietnamese are ready for us to come over. They want auto suppliers and they are very helpful and friendly.”

AES makes the tools and dies used to form carpeting in many new cars. The company sells to tier one suppliers. “We kind of have a niche market,” said Paulson. “It doesn’t generate as much attention or competition.” Part of AES’ success is that the state-of-the-art company reacts quickly when auto designers make interior design changes.

The 45,000-square-foot building was constructed to AES’ specifications. A 15,000-square-foot addition allowed AES to begin an on-site subsidiary, Advanced Interior Solutions Inc., AISI. Its specialty is automotive interior compression-molded parts such as moveable sunroof sunshades supplied to tier one automotive suppliers.

AES employs 50 workers. “But we don’t have the typical tool and die people,” said Paulson. “We have a younger work force who’ve come to us and we pretty much teach them how we expect things to be done,” Paulson said.

Majority owner Daklak Do founded AES in Monroe 1996 in a 5,000-square-foot space. Two years later, the company outgrew the space and moved to Middletown, doubling its floor space. AES relocated to Springboro in 2000.

Closer Ties with the City

Peggy Johnson, owner of Magnolias on Main, has partnered with about 10 to 15 other small business owners along South Main Street, forming the Historic Businesses of Springboro to improve communication, marketing, customer service and relations with the city. Later this year, a television commercial promoting the historic businesses will air on WHIO-TV, Channel 7.

“We’ve become more involved with the city in the last few months and our relationship is evolving,” she says. “I think we’ll see good things come from maintaining a strong relationship with the city,” she says.



Scott Paulson, VP of Operations, and Daklak Do, majority owner, are shown on the factory floor.

This newsletter is a publication of the City of Springboro. Visit us on the web at www.ci.springboro.oh.us. All inquiries should be made to Chris Pozzuto, Assistant City Manager, at (937) 748-4350.

A Green Lion in 'Boro

Yellow concrete lions sit on the pillars of the bridge over the Great Miami River in Franklin.

Red Lions decorate several lawns in the unincorporated community of Red Lion, south of Springboro.

Now, Green Lion Studios, 505 S. Main St., and vibrant artist Karleen Materne join the mix of small unique retail outlets in the historic district.

Karleen taught art in public schools for 15 years before striking out on her own. Green Lion began life on North Main Street and moved into the quaint building on South Main Street almost a year ago.

In addition to her teaching experience, Karleen has a son entering sixth grade and another entering second grade, giving her plenty of hands-on experience with art and children. A recent Harry Potter Wand Making Workshop was so successful, she had to quickly schedule a second one.

First and foremost, Green Lion is a fine arts studio whose fall offerings include drawing, acrylics and watercolors. "There are never paper plates or Popsicle sticks used in our projects. We use real artist materials."

Children in kindergarten through sixth grade attend open studios on 6 to 8 p.m. Mondays, starting in September. Youngsters "explore the world of visual arts through experimentation with a variety of media, such as pastels, paint, paper, clay and more."

The "Flyin' Lion" (Green Lion to-go) offers on-site art classes and projects for preschools, businesses, civic and social groups, senior citizen centers, assisted living facilities, daycare centers and other sites. "We make art fun, therapeutic and relaxing in these environments," said Materne.

Rapidly gaining in popularity are Friday evening Artist Trading Card (ATC) workshops, a bring-your-own-wine event for adults. Local artist Glenda Miles approached Karleen with the idea of hosting ATC workshops and the studio has been hosting them since April. ATCs were begun in 1997 by an artist in Zurich, Switzerland and have gained worldwide popularity. Green Lion provides the snacks, music and supplies. Attendees create playing-card size trading cards using clippings from many sources, press-on letters, almost anything to create a unique piece of miniature art. "These have become popular throughout the world, and are great fun to create and trade," said Materne.

Check out the studio website at www.greenlionstudios.org or e-mail info@greenlionstudios.com. The studio can also be reached at 748-9441.



Green Lion Owner Karleen Materne relaxes on the front porch of the art studio.

Appreciation on the Menu

Springboro's Annual Business Appreciation Breakfast is one small way the City says "thank you" to local businesses.

Some 175 people attended the third breakfast buffet, held Thursday, April 8, at Heatherwoode Golf Club. City Manager Chris Thompson expressed the City's continuing commitment to work closely with local businesses, not only in Springboro, but throughout the region, to the benefit of the both the City and the region. "The City is not an island," she said. "We work with our businesses, Clearcreek Township, local schools and other entities. We are working on strengthening our regional relationships with both Montgomery and Warren counties. When we prosper as a region, Springboro prospers as well."

She recapped the status of updates to the City's strategic plan and comprehensive land use plan. Both documents were created in the 1990s. With input from businesses and residents, the City is revising both to serve as a blueprint for progress. Work on updating the strategic plan began in May with a meeting that included City leaders, planning consultants, business leaders and residents.

Chamber of Commerce President Becky Hartle spoke briefly, noting the Chamber currently has more than 400 members and the annual business expo held in the spring was the most successful one in the event's history.



Coffee and conversation flowed freely as breakfast attendees met at Heatherwoode for the City's annual Business Appreciation Breakfast.

Brass Pig Flowers into Magnolias

Can a Brass Pig morph into sprays of magnolias? Yes, says Magnolias On Main owner Peggy Johnson.

The Brass Pig, at 245 S. Main Street, served Springboro as a genteel eatery featuring American favorites. Before most current city residents moved to Springboro, it was the Grange Hall—the Grange being an organization for communities' farmers.

In late July, the Magnolias on Main sign in front of the building proclaimed the completion of the transformation.

Twenty months ago, Brass Pig owner Becky Hall approached Peggy about purchasing the business. "Within a week, we were on our way," Peggy recalls.

She found operating a restaurant was neither her niche nor her passion. She closed the doors of the Brass Pig on June 9 and began a transformation blitz that is now Magnolias on Main Street. The gift and women's fashion shop lives up to the comfortable, cozy images the name itself conjures.

Silk magnolias fill the store, which divides nicely into an area of unique gifts and another featuring fashion-forward accessories.

"I plan on broadening my clothing line, but I'll always offer one-of-kind, single pieces that are unique," said Johnson. "The same is true of my accessories. We carry Pandora Beads, She Beads and several months ago, I began carrying Troll Beads as well. These are favorites of women who appreciate fine accessories." In addition, she offers an array of unique handbags ranging from whimsical to formal.

Peggy owned and operated Victoria's Antiques and Gifts on South Main Street for several years. Her business savvy, she says, was all on-the-job Training. With Victoria's, she phased out antiques to concentrate on gifts. Today, with Magnolias, she's found her focus and her niche. Coincidentally, she was born in Magnolia, Ky., giving the boutique's name special meaning.

Magnolias On Main is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and can be reached at 748-2546 or 748-4914.



Peggy Johnson, owner of Magnolias On Main

Seeing the Light

By the holiday season, Springboro motorists should find it easier to enter and exit retail outlets along the north and south sides of West Central Avenue at Springboro Pointe Shopping Center

City officials recently successfully concluded negotiations with Discount Drug Mart Inc. and the shopping center, and a traffic signal will be erected at the heavily traveled strip. A recently approved City Council resolution authorizing the traffic signal concluded almost two years of negotiations.

Springboro Pointe and Drug Mart will fund \$125,116 of the cost and the city will fund a maximum of \$61,000.

Why We Do What We Do: Master Planning

You don't have to drive very far in any direction from Springboro to see graphic proof of why communities need to plan for all types of growth—residential, commercial, industrial and infrastructure.

City planning commissions, land use plans, zoning regulations and other tools are essential to ensuring orderly growth.

Managing Springboro's phenomenal growth has been a key challenge for the City for more than 10 years.

The City's Comprehensive Land Use Master Plan was finalized in 1998. "We are still using it, but we are in the process of updating it," says City Planning Consultant Dan Boron.

Today, small office development, retail and new technology development is on the rise and serves the needs of the about 17,500 residents. Although that growth slowed last year, the City's population has rocketed since 1990.

Throughout the rapid growth period, City policies have sought to ensure the preservation of the city's rich history, while encouraging growth. "We've also addressed how we make certain the City's long-range infrastructure keeps pace with the growth," he said.

City Council and the Planning Commission try to ensure that issues before planners are handled on a one-to-one basis. City staff usually meets with a property owner, agent or architect for a "technical review" prior to an official meeting. That provides clear direction and fosters a better understanding of the planning process.

Once new developments get to the formal review level, the Planning Commission reviews how a new building or a development fits into the overall master plan for the City. The City has been able to maintain a high level of development over its many years of growth and the Planning Commission is there to ensure it stays that way into the future. With the City staff and Planning Commission working together to adhere to the Master Plan, the City can realize better overall developments for its current and future residents.