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SPRING 2009

VOLUME 5

Sweet Dreams at Friesinger's Chocolates

The spirit of Willy Wonka lives and thrives in Friesinger's Fine Chocolates in Springboro. The sweet magic happens daily in an unpresupposing building at 45 N. Pioneer Blvd.

Friesinger's Chocolates began in 1894. In 1986, the three-generation enterprise was sold to another multi-generational family business – the Dayton Nut Company, owned by the Maschino family.

Stan Maschino still runs Dayton Nut, while his wife, Marilyn and sons Kurt and Kyle operate Friesinger's.

Kyle is in charge of the candy manufacturing operation while Kurt handles the increasing marketing and sales to fund-raising organizations, packaging and more. Both sons hold business degrees. Marilyn still works in the store each day.

If Friesinger's isn't a familiar name to consumers, it is because the chocolates and candies are sold primarily to other stores and many are rebranded for resale and fund-raising.

Inside Friesinger's, customers watch the candy-making process through a large viewing window. Year-round favorites and seasonal specialties fill display cases throughout the year.

"Christmas is the busiest season. We have about 20 employees and we hire temporary staff for our busy times. We are lucky that we have people who come back each year," says Marilyn.

The candy-making formulas and quality ingredients have changed very little over the years. As with other businesses, Friesinger's has seen its material costs increase recently. "We will not jeopardize the quality of our products by reformulating our recipes when ingredient costs increase."

That doesn't mean Friesinger's doesn't adapt to the times. Kyle created some of the sugar-free products now available and demand continues to increase.

The Maschino family also developed and markets microwaveable "Minute Fudge." Fudge lovers choose chocolate or vanilla flavor, add a little butter, a little water, mix and microwave in its own container. Instructions for easy variations are included.

In keeping with the 'family business' history, the Maschino's daughter, Lynn Hartman, helps in the store three days a week, and, with Kyle, does all Friesingers' package designs.

The frantic pace at Friesinger's now eases but will soon ramp up as Mother's Day approaches.

The Pioneer Boulevard store is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays during holiday seasons.

The website is at www.friesingers.com. For more information, call 937-743-4377



Why We Do What We Do – Business Roundtables

Business Retention is at the top of our list when it comes to our extensive business community. One way we are attempting to reach out to our existing businesses is through a new program we started this year—Business Roundtables.

Specific in-depth business visits with every single small business in the City (as we currently do with our large businesses), would prove nearly impossible, seeing that we have over 525 businesses within the City—so we have created a concept that allows us to reach the largest number of businesses possible, while maintaining a small group feel to allow for an optimum exchange of information.

The roundtables will include representatives of the City of Springboro, Springboro Chamber of Commerce, Warren County Economic Development, Ohio Department of Development, Congressman Turner's Office as well as Senator Voinovich's Office to briefly discuss the different types of business assistance that each representative or organization can provide to Springboro businesses. After introductions by each representative, we will have a general discussion about any "hot topics" or questions that the businesses may have—whether it be a local, state or federal issue.

The specific businesses will be invited by geographic location within the City. This should hopefully promote familiarity with their business neighbors as well as similar issues that may be topics for discussion.

Future roundtables in 2009 are scheduled for Wednesday, May 20; Tuesday, July 14; Wednesday, September 9; Tuesday, November 10. They will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. at Heatherwoode. Invitations to the roundtables will be delivered by Nick Motto, our Business Retention Specialist.

For more information, please feel free to contact Nick at nickm@cityofspringboro.com or (937) 748-4359.

Matrix Takes Its Services to Worldwide Clients

Matrix Risk Consultants, Inc. clients operate in the much-discussed and analyzed 'global marketplace.'

To better serve them and open new markets, Matrix has opened a new office in China and will open new sites in India, Mexico, and Brazil before the end of the year.

"When complete, this major market expansion will see our engineering staff at about 100 locations around the world. Our goal is to have 150 engineers by 2012," says Sheryl Hickman, Matrix's Vice President of Finance and Administration.

Matrix provides a broad base of engineering expertise in property loss prevention services. Clients are offered detailed engineering services in the following range of specialties: fire protection and property loss control; boiler and machinery reliability, property risk management support, infrared inspection services and combustion control testing and training.

In those categories, the company offers almost 20 unbundled areas of specialization, customized for each client.

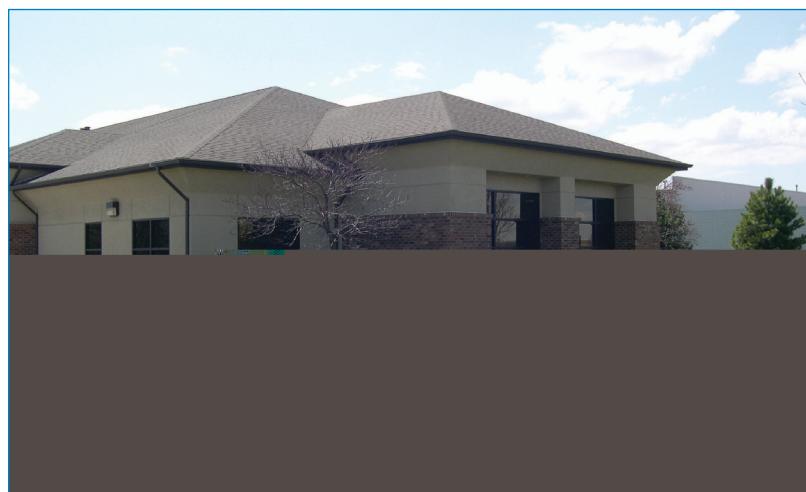
"New business and an aggressive marketing strategy have driven our expansion plans, and many of our clients in the U.S. have plants overseas as well."

Local engineers from the countries slated for Matrix offices will attend a new training program Matrix will offer at Eastern Kentucky State University and at the corporate office in Springboro. For engineers new to risk management, the program will be a six-month course. Experienced engineers will complete a two or three-week training session.

The move to an international organization was aided by the AXA Corporate Solutions Services purchase of Matrix's stock in 2007. Matrix remains a separate entity from AXA.

Fourteen engineers and 11 technology and administrative personnel work from the Matrix office at 3130 South Tech Blvd. "We moved here 10 years ago because of the price, taxes and the location. We have a great relationship with the City and we would encourage anyone to move here." Springboro's convenient access to several airports and expressways is important to Matrix employees.

For more information, visit www.matrixrc.com or call 937-432-2050.



Jim Lehman Opens Covenant Financial 'Boro Office

For Springboro's Jim Lehman, opening the doors of Covenant Financial Concepts at 5 E. Mill St. represents a joyful homecoming of sorts.

Jim had been associated with the Covenant office in Kettering. In the fall, he made the decision to bring his services to Springboro, his home for 30 years. A chance chat with local attorney and friend Roger Eckert, led to Jim leasing space in Eckert's office building.

Jim is an Investment Advisor Representative and completed certification in Long Term Care. He offers clients financial, retirement and estate planning as well as wide range of insurance and investment products.

"I enjoy having an independently owned practice. It lets me select funds and insurance companies that best fit my clients' needs. While I have access to about 20 insurance companies, I work primarily with two or three top-rated companies. That ensures that I really understand these companies, their ratings, performance, longevity, client service and so on."

Jim enjoyed a successful 25-year career in senior management in human resources and total quality control before starting out in his financial career 10 years ago.

"I'm excited to be back home again. My goal is to grow the business and help other small businesses with their financial needs, including their IRAs and 401k plans."

Jim had an exhibit at the recent Springboro business expo and is a member of the Chamber of Commerce.

He and his wife, Cynthia, have two adult children and two grandchildren. Cindy taught Springboro Junior High School for many years. Before retiring two years ago, she led the district's program for the academically gifted and teacher mentoring programs. She currently works part-time in the district's mentoring program. Jim coached cross-country at the high school and volunteered as a youth sports coach for soccer, baseball, and softball. He and Cynthia have been involved in various school-related activities throughout the years.

Jim's office is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. He can be reached at 748-8588 or by e-mail at jim@covenantfinancialconcepts.com

Securities and Advisory Services Offered Through Multi-Financial Securities Corp., member FINRA, SIPC. Covenant Financial Concepts not affiliated with Multi Financial Services Corp.

APEC Casts Wide Experience, Knowledge Net



From projects for industrial giants MeadWestvaco, BASF, Cargill, Appleton Paper and others, to work for nearby cities such as Fairborn and Wooster, engineers at APEC cast a wide net woven of knowledge and experience.

APEC's home base is in Midway Business Park, 865 W. Central Ave. The 9,000 square foot office offers space for APEC's 20 engineers to work, meet with clients, and room for expansion, says Senior Engineer Ken Meine who holds overall responsibility for management and administration.

APEC, Associated Professional Engineering Consultants, Inc., is now in its 24th year. Ken is among the founding members and recalls that the early years focused on the pulp and paper industry.

Today, it serves other heavy industrial facilities and processes as well, particularly those with product lines that run 24 hours a day, year round. It has served more than 85 clients on more than 1,000 projects worldwide.

"Our main thrust is still heavy industry and those companies that require our heavier industrial skills. With today's economy and the current downsizing we've been able to find talented engineers in this area."

APEC is not immune to the fallout of the current downturn. "This is the second major downturn we've been through. The first was 9/11. That took the wind out of all construction," he recalls.

As it did following 9/11, APEC continues to broaden its client base. "We're doing some commercial work. Mostly it's a matter of helping out some local commercial businesses.

"All our engineers are very cognizant of sales. While we do locate new clients through our trade organizations, mostly it's calling our existing customers and staying in close touch,"

In addition to plant upgrades and retrofits, APEC also takes on projects from initial feasibility studies through construction monitoring and start-up assistance. With its 24 years experience, APEC has a wide network of specialists who can be brought on to projects as needed.

For more information, check out the website at www.APEC.com or call 937-746-4600.



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Name Says It – Simplesoft Solutions Does It

Don Menrisky has taken his company, Simplesoft Solutions, Inc., from 'testing the waters' in 1994, to having one office building constructed and another on the drawing board.

Simplesoft's new 4,400 sq. ft. building is tucked away in a small, budding business enclave off North Main Street. Don and eight staff members work there; a partner operates a Chicago office and their marketing and training expert operates from an office in Ripley, W. Va.

"Right now, we're not using the whole building, so I have 1,400 sq. ft. of office space for lease. Once that's done, we're hopeful we will begin construction on the other building. Eventually, I'd like to see our staff expand and fill both buildings," says Don.

"Most of our clients are in the Southwest Ohio area, north to Columbus and south to northern Kentucky."

Simplesoft Solutions is a value-added reseller, specializing in Sage Software. Sage is a premiere supplier of accounting and business management software products.

Don's company makes certain that clients can take full advantage of all the features and applications available to them in their software suites.

"Our customers know their businesses. They don't want to be a slave to software." They do, however, want the

most for their software dollars. "We use the software tools to improve and automate their business processes."

Some companies call on Simplesoft for staff training. Others want help to ensure the business is using existing or new software packages to improve all aspects of operations – from lead generation to quoting, forecasting, and billing to customer service and support, customer relationship management, and more.

Simplesoft's clients operate businesses with as few as 30 and as many as 500 employees, and revenues between \$10 and \$300 million. "Most of our clients fall in the '\$30 million range for annual revenue. Our base is with manufacturing, technical and professional services firms. In the last couple of years, we've begun seeing other businesses, such as brokerages, and others, using our services."

While Simplesoft focuses on Sage products, the company also develops custom software for clients.

Don and his wife, Susan, have lived in Springboro for 10 years. Their son graduated from Springboro High School and attends Ohio University, while their daughter is a freshman at the high school.

For more information, call 937-885-1085, or log on to www.simplesoft.net.