

Summer 2013

geauga BUSINESS

TRULINE INDUSTRIES INTEGRITY ABOVE ALL



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A Valued Partner with Geauga Businesses [pg 12](#)

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The World Leading Provider of Fuel Pump Components

Truline President Stuart Watson stands beside a Rolls Royce Trent 1000 engine equipped with Truline drive and driven bearings.

Truline Industries

Integrity Above All

by Margie Wilber

Every second of every day, a plane with Truline fuel engine components takes off. And Truline-powered aircraft fly the equivalent of 45 round trips to the moon... daily. But, more impressive is the company's commitment to making a difference for a world in need.

"Truline has been in business for 74 years; not because of the products we make but because we do not cut corners – not in our work, not in the way we treat our employees, not in the way we interact with our clients, and not in our commitment to the world in need outside our doors. We donate 20% of revenues to charities and are challenging other companies to do the same," Stuart Watson, Truline president, says. Last year, Truline reported \$12 million in sales, donating more than \$1.2 million to charities locally, in the United States, and around the globe.



“We deliver the highest value for our customers. That means our talented precision machinists utilize the latest technology to deliver a product the way they want it – the first time, every time.”

Truline Industries Integrity, Above All

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“We also put enormous value in our employees and their families. We believe that the relationships we develop in every area of our business allow us to build Christ-like character that is integral to everything that we do,” adds Court Durkalski, Truline owner, responsible for the philanthropic arm of the privately owned business.

Zero-to-No Competition

Truline Industries has been in business since 1939. Currently located at 11685 Chillicothe Road, in Chesterland, Truline utilizes a 24,000-sq.-ft. manufacturing plant, quality oriented to AS 9100. Truline manufactures bronze and aluminum bearings, bushings, seal and related close-tolerance precision parts. The exclamation point: Truline Industries is the leading supplier of main fuel pump drive and driven friction bearings for aircraft throughout the world.

Who calls on Truline Industries? Truline’s client list includes such well-known and respected global leaders as GE, Snecma, Pratt and Whitney Roll Royce. Together, they dominate such industries as aerospace, commercial aircraft, defense, energy, turbo-machinery, and eco-efficiency travel.

From fuel pump bearings for the aircraft industry to high-tolerance precision machine parts, Truline Industries is helping place Geauga County on the map for industry leaders.

“We own over 90 percent of the business, beating any competition with quality and on-time delivery,” Watson suggests. Born and raised in England, Watson traveled to the United States for employment, eventually joining Truline in 1983, when the manufacturing plant was located in Wickliffe, Ohio.

“Frank Durkalski, Truline owner and CEO, was leasing their building at the time. When the lease was up, he noticed land available in Chesterland while driving back from work to his home on Mulberry,” recalls Frank’s son Court, 53. “Gauga County is a great place to work and raise a family. The county is very business friendly and willing to work with business proactively.”

Innovative Technology

Truline makes use of the latest innovative technology in their field.

“We’ll take our customer’s vision, and craft the piece that is right for them, working with their engineers to put high-quality machining ability into their design,”

describes the 57-year-old Truline President Watson. “We deliver the highest value for our customers. That means our talented precision machinists utilize the latest technology to deliver a product the way they want it – the first time, every time. It’s all about quality in this industry, and why we don’t have competition. This fuel pump component in aircraft is very difficult to make. If we could do it easier, we wouldn’t have a business. They would take the job away and make it cheaper in China or South America. Because it is so difficult, Truline must invest in the best machines and training.” All military and commercial airline use the Truline part.

Watson engages in a bit of technical talk: “At Truline, we work to flatness that can be measured in millionths of an inch.” Some of Truline’s tolerance and accuracy capabilities include:

- Super Precision Wasino and Hardinge turning centers with programming/offset capabilities of .00001
- Custom designed Truline Flattening computer controlled machines designed solely to flat your parts to w/in +/- .0001
- Hass CNC milling machines can produce parts to +/- 0.00015 inches
- Inspection equipment is accurate to +/- 0.00005 inches
- Measuring machines produce repeatable readings of 0.00001 inches



Computerization has been central to Truline's capabilities. Truline worked hard to develop custom-software systems that back up strict production processes. Truline's Unix Filepro system has the following specifications:

- Customized integration from quote through purchase order, manufacturing, final inspection, invoicing, shipping, and certification
- Real-time production control
- Can check the status of a part at any point in the production line
- Support all users, supplying timely and accurate information for production and sales
- All computer-controlled machines are directly linked to Truline's command center, maintaining quality control and ensuring job specifications are strictly adhered to

Machining with a variety of non-ferrous leaded bronzes, aluminums and plastics, Truline currently stocks these and other hard-to-find materials in their 100,000-pound inventory of bar stock:

- High-leaded bronzes – 20%, 25%, 30%
- 2017 – 7075 Aluminum alloys
- 852 ASTM B108 Aluminum alloys.
- Manganese bronzes
- Copper Alloys

"Our machining centers can produce multiple milling operations at one time to reduce the amount of machine changes a piece must go through before becoming a finished part," adds Watson.

In addition, Truline stores the information collected about each product in their fully automated inventory management system – offering easy retrieval of data about past product materials within minutes.

Turning, facing and boring tools used in these operations are produced using specialized carbides, diamond-lapped to mirror finishes. Hass CNC vertical milling machines, all utilizing the same custom-designed pod system, bring consistency and repeatability to all the milled features of a print.

"Quality assurance is of the utmost importance," Watson reiterates. "That is why we make use of the latest quality inspection equipment. Our inspection department is built on its own foundation to minimize vibration. Our procedures and inspection techniques are so comprehensive that we have virtually eliminated receiving inspection by our customers, saving them both time and cost. We are a dock to stock supplier for Eaton Corporation, Hamilton Sundstrand/UTC, Lear-Romec, Goodrich Corporation, Woodward Governor, and Parker Hannifin."



Servant Leaders

"As CEO, I believe in the 'servant leadership' business model," Watson continues. "CEOs of companies need to stop being 'boss' or 'manager' or 'big wheel' and become a humble servant. The chief executive's major function should be to serve his employees and make sure employees have the resources they need to get the job done well."

He continues, "At Truline, our tolerance levels are tight. My job is to give our employees the right machines, training,



Advancing the Truline Vision

But, unlike most manufacturing facilities, it's not all about production and profits at this Chesterland manufacturing plant.

"We will, through development of relationships that value our employees and their families, our customers, our suppliers and local community, present the Gospel message and Christ-like character for the purpose of salvation and discipleship. We firmly believe that these principles will foster excellence and integrity in our company, making us a world leader in our field," Durkalski says.

Truline Industries supports the following missions:

- **Convoy of Hope** – International & national disaster relief, children's feeding and local community outreach
- **World missionaries** in China, Kenya and Pakistan
- **US missionaries** in East St. Louis, IL, East Cleveland, OH, Painesville, OH
- **Collegiate Missions** in Boulder, CO
- **International Justice Mission** – Rescue from sexual slavery
- **Teen Challenge** – Drug and alcohol rehabilitation
- **Ronald McDonald House** – Support for parents with sick children
- **Project Hope for the Homeless** – Homeless shelter for Lake County
- **Compassion International** – Children's feeding and schooling
- **Lake County YMCA** – Support for scholarships for needy families
- **Michael Carter Foundation** – Support for families of children & adults with special needs

Truline Industries Integrity, Above All

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salary and benefits so they can do their job to the best of their abilities. In the past six months, Truline invested \$1 million for the best machines on the market for this purpose. I don't want to see our employees struggle – whether in their workplace, financially, physically or emotionally."

At Truline, there is no co-pay for medical insurance and hourly workers receive pay for sick time. "A lot of people ask me, 'How can you afford to do that?' And I ask them in return, 'How can you afford not to do that?' The Truline culture is one of family. Our goal is to raise our employees up," states Watson.

"It's Gospel," insists Durkalski. "Our responsibilities as human beings is to take care of other human beings. My desire is to show our employees that I love them and will do the most I can for them. Everything flows through God's purposes which are relationships and redemption. We are taught to leave our problems at home. Don't bring them to work. At Truline, we say bring them here. We want to help fix your problems – whether they are financial, emotional, in your marriage, etc. We have marriage seminars, financial workshops, etc.

We try to keep in the forefront that we are here for them."

Both Durkalski and Watson say they do not look for skills when hiring, but character. "I cannot tell you the number of times we were burnt hiring an employee on their skills. We require no skill level at the time of hiring," Watson explains. Instead, he says Truline uses tri-matrix evaluation criteria acquired through an on-line test. "It has worked at least 80 percent of the time. Our turnover rate is extremely low. I can train skill sets; I can never train character."

Truline employee Melissa DeCamillo says, "Truline is a very good place to work. They provide excellent training and take very good care of their employees. It's unreal. I have worked here for 13 years. It's like a little family."

All Truline employees are cross-trained on the various machines and receive one hour weekly of continuous education using an online resource that teaches fundamental aspects of machining as well as all OSHA and HazMat training, blueprint reading, geometric tolerances, etc., depending on work responsibilities.

"Last year, Truline reported

\$12 million in sales, donating

more than \$1.2 million to

charities locally, in the United

States, and around the globe."


"In 1994, Convoy of Hope was formed and has transformed into a global movement where churches, businesses, government agencies, and other organizations join forces to carry out Convoy of Hope's mission, which is to feed the world through feeding initiatives, community outreaches, disaster response and partner resourcing," says the passionate Durkalski.

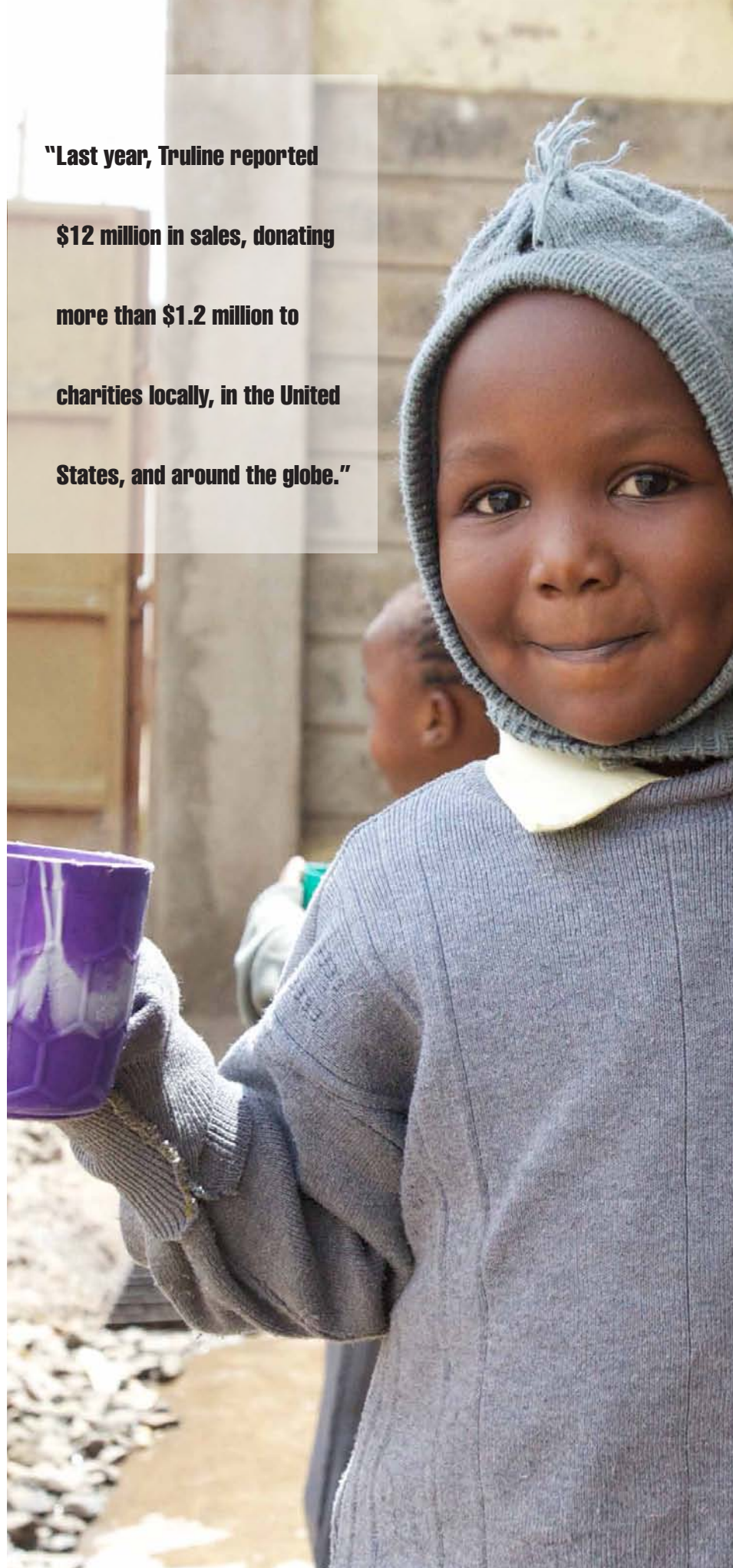
In 16 years, Convoy of Hope has helped more than 50 million people in more than 100 countries. In that time, Truline has also given away more than \$254 million worth of food and supplies to people in need.

"Thirty years ago, Court's brother Dean was killed in a drunk-driving accident. Dean was my friend," Watson explains. "That event effected the whole company. Court was at Bible College and came back to run the company. I was working with Dean at Truline at the time of his death. Faith played a big part in the company moving forward."

"We try to run Truline on principles," states Durkalski. "The more we did it that way, the more successful we became as a business. I do not consider myself the owner of this company. God owns this company."

Today, Truline supports a total of 17 charities. Durkalski decides which charities to support based on faith. "I try to just listen to God. There are tons of opportunity and a lot of asks. Basically, I look to who I have relationships with. There is trust and security in that. We are helping to feed people around the world; create hope in the inner city; free people in the human slave trade industry.

Truline encourages other adventurous businesses in Geauga County to embark on the path they have been on for some time. The Truline Challenge is to donate 20% of revenues to an organization that helps those in need. To get involved, please call Betsy Deliere at 440.386.4144 for more information. 





Arborwear:

the **perfect fit** for local businessman's lifestyle

by Margie Wilber

Bill Weber loves the great outdoors – has his whole life. Perfection, to him, is fly fishing on a cool early morning, paddling his Mad River canoe down fast-moving waters, and backpacking in one of our country's breathtaking national parks. It was this affection and respect for nature that motivated the Chagrin Falls native to start his own tree service company out of high school. Weber continued in this line of work after graduating from the University of Vermont in 1990.

Similarly, Weber's childhood friend Paul Taylor, Jr., shared this passion for nature early on – also working as an arborist in high school and college, and starting a tree service business after college. During this physically demanding work, Taylor realized a need for better clothing that could withstand the repetitive, rigorous activity the job demanded.

"Back then, there were two types of pants for tree work: canvas work pants or rock climbing

pants. Canvas pants were too stiff, never fit very well and restricted movement. Rock climbing pants, on the other hand, allowed free movement but didn't hold up well to tree work; not to mention they cost an arm and a leg," Weber describes.

Weber credits his good friend for coming up with the solution – designing comfortable canvas work pants that fit well, held up on the job, cost less, and that you could actually move in. In 1997, after many prototypes and on-the-job testing, Taylor founded Arborwear.

Within a few years, Taylor needed help. In 2001, he invited Weber to partner with him as the fledgling company began to take root.

"I never thought I would end up making clothes for some of the same folks I worked with," chuckles Weber. "Sure, there are days I'd rather be working in the trees, but we all have those days."



In the foreground Bill Weber and his staff look on during the timber-cutting celebration of the new Arborware store in Chagrin Falls.

Taylor ran the business out of his parents' garage the first year; then as the business grew, he moved it into his house where Weber joined him. As orders grew, they rented the cabin together on Kinsman Road in Newbury, Ohio where they could more efficiently design and warehouse their ever-growing clothes line.

"We always sourced out the manufacturing, or contracted the sewing, to factories across the U.S," Weber explains. "But over time, we couldn't get fabric in the U.S. because the mills were closing, or the sewing factories closed. Now, our clothing is made in China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Guatemala, El Salvador and a little in the United States."

"We had so much fun in the early years," reflects the passionate businessman. "I'll never forget coming to work and finding a box of Arborwear pants smoldering in the yard. Paul had discovered a box of pants in the garage that had become home to a nest of carpenter ants. He lit the whole box of these ant-infested pants on fire. Paul had thrown it out the window."

The friends parted ways in 2008 when Taylor left Arborwear to start another company, says Weber.

Today, Arborwear currently employs 23 full and part-time workers. The company's 2012 annual gross sales totals just under \$10 million.

Arborwear manufactures and sells an extensive line of clothing for professional users, such as arborists; recreational users,

such as avid rock climbers; and weekenders, such as those who simply enjoy splitting their own firewood or working outside in the garden. Three years ago, Arborwear launched a women's clothing line. And Arborwear's creative team continues to introduce approximately six to 12 innovative new items each year.

"We are doing a lot more with performance products and diversifying our cotton products," states the savvy businessman. In addition to the original heavy-duty canvas work pants, Arborwear now designs, manufactures and sells jackets, sweatshirts, t-shirts, shorts, underwear and hats.

They categorize sales as "direct" (in-store, on-line or phone orders), "corporate" or "dealer." Davey Tree Expert Company is one of Arborwear's biggest corporate customers. Local, corporate customers include Nelson Tree Service and the Geauga, Cleveland and Lake Metroparks. Arborwear products are sold in all 50 states and abroad, particularly Canada, the United Kingdom and Germany.

In December of 2012, Weber and his elite team of designers, salesmen, marketing professionals, production crew and office staff boxed everything and moved operations under one roof in Chagrin Falls. Within the 18,500 sq.-ft. property is now the Arborwear flagship retail store which opened at 8269 East Washington Street. The store is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"We desperately needed more office and warehouse space," Weber says. "Arborwear

doubled in sales every year up to 2006, and then the growth slowed. We are again on a pretty aggressive growth path."

"At Arborwear, we are passionate about fit, comfort and longevity of our product," says the 45-year-old business owner. "Your clothes should fit the same from style to style. They should be comfortable the second you try them on and should be able to work as hard as you. We work our tails off trying to keep it that way."

A few production methods that make Arborwear unique:

- **GARMENT WASHING** – weave or knit the all-cotton fabric, wash it, build the garment, and then wash it again. This pre-shrinks the garment and breaks it in so it is comfortable and ready to wear right off the rack.
- **INDUSTRIAL STITCHING** - use industrial, double-needle stitching throughout and strategically place bar tacks to reduce seam blowouts and strengthen wear and tear areas for long use.
- **3-PIECE RUGGED GUSSET** - used to extend from inner knee to inner knee on all pants to give incredible range of motion and reduce seam stress.
- **RINGSPUN CANVAS** - use 12.5 oz. cotton canvas ring spun in their heavy duty apparel for durability and comfort.
- **PERFORMANCE FABRICS** - expanded beyond traditional cotton canvas to create items with high performance fabrics that protect you from the elements with properties such as

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Arborwear

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moisture wicking, fast drying, UV protection, and odor inhibiting.

- **YKK ZIPPERS** - used in all Arborwear products, these zippers are the benchmark for strength and durability.

“The features that make our clothes great for tree work are the same for any demanding work environment or lifestyle. We’re not about bells and whistles – just the necessities that work,” Weber states.

“Making honest, hardworking clothing remains our passion. Each of our innovative, free-moving designs are made using heavy duty fabrics. We don’t test our clothes in some fancy lab, but personally test them, from the tops of trees to dragging brush on the ground,” laughs Weber. “The result is something you can trust day in and day out.”

Satisfied customers share their stories on the Arborwear website. “Working on a two-week-long timber cruise in Limerick Forest in Ontario, Canada, cruising red pine stands. This week the weather has gotten colder, and we are down to -25c temps. My Arborwear beanie and Arborwear ascender pants with merino wool long johns were up to the task of busting brush, getting into contorted measuring positions, snowshoeing over snow-bent trees, 10 feet above ground, all without fail or a whimper from all the buckthorn and prickly ash. Love this stuff,” wrote Cary Gibsons.

Michael Skwarczek wrote, “My wife, myself, and our 15-year-old daughter traveled for a year in South America. Compressing our lives into three 60L packs wasn’t easy. But wearing Arborwear through years of wilderness backpacking made one decision clear.” Everyone brought a pair of Arborwear Tech Pants.

Closer to home, the Cleveland Metroparks Fire Crew uses Arborwear’s original tree climber pants as one of the components of each fire crew member’s gear. “Felling trees, mopping up and cutting hot logs, and creating fire breaks have put these pants through the ultimate test of strength




and durability,” says Rick Tyler, member of the Cleveland Metroparks Fire Crew.

Weber encourages folks to visit the retail store and attend their annual spring and fall warehouse sales. On the menu in spring’s blowout event is broiled crawfish, and in the fall, chicken -stuffed pigs roasted to perfection. During these events, Arborwear also sponsors free seminars that include, “Aerial Lift Safety and Techniques,” “Aerial Lift Evacuation and Rescue,” “Chainsaw Safety and Maintenance,” and “Chainsaw Safety and Cutting Techniques,” to name a few.

“I am associated with the Tree Care Association and work hard to promote safety. Tree care is the second largest worker’s comp behind commercial fishing,” says Weber. “Two people every week die in the tree service industry, and that does not include all the chainsaw injuries.”

“We have one of the best teams around and working together here is like one big family,” says Weber. “But when I am not with this family, I’m with my other family at home. We spend as much time outdoors as possible and try and squeeze in family dinners between athletic games or after-school activities.”

Weber and his wife Debbie have four children between the ages of 16 and 6. The family resides in Chagrin Falls. 

Arborwear manufactures and sells an extensive line of clothing for professional users, such as arborists; recreational users, such as avid rock climbers; and weekenders, such as those who simply enjoy splitting their own firewood or working outside in the garden.





POV Communications Celebrates 21st Birthday with Move

by Margie Wilber

Persistence of Vision (POV) Communications, Inc. turns 21 years old this year. Hip Hip Hooray! Unlike many that age, the move is not out of a parent's home but from 12021 Ravenna Road in Chardon to 16715 West Park Circle Drive in Chagrin Falls. The printing company's continued success required expanding the space and workforce to satisfy growing print orders.

"We're keeping it local," says Chris Yuhasz, owner and president of POV, with a smile. "After 21 years in business, I know what got us here – local support. That is why moving out of Geauga County was never really on the table. We are committed to this community, and POV continues to support local business and industry as well as nonprofit organizations like the Geauga Public Library, local schools, and Metzenbaum Center. It's our way of saying, "Thanks."

Last year, POV and Write 2 the Point, a local marketing/public relations firm, launched Geauga Business. This business-to-business magazine serves Geauga County, affording local business and industry principals an opportunity to share information such as expansions, improvements, history, events and needs with other business leaders.

Yuhasz admits his printing business started on a whim.

"I started the business with a good friend Greg Elliot. We both grew up together, graduating from Orange High School and later Edinboro College in Pennsylvania with B.A. and M.A. degrees in communications. Upon graduating, neither of us wanted to work for anyone," laughs the gregarious

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Chris Yuhasz, Owner and President of POV Communications



POV Communications Celebrates 21st Birthday with Move

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business owner. "Originally, we wanted to start an industrial broadcast company, but printing was easier to get into financially. So at 22 years old, we started POV in 1992."

The young men opened shop with only a couple of computers, offering digital printing. They continued to expand to satisfy customer demand. Eventually, Yuhasz became the sole owner when Elliot decided to work with his father in Virginia.

"Our business requires strict control of the manufacturing, timeline and quality," says the 43-year-old businessman, seated in his attractive Chagrin Falls office. "This continues to be our business model today. We are serious about what we do and take pride in it. Over the years, we've made a few mistakes, but we try to make every client experience positive. Everyone who works at POV is always watching the product through the various production stages and trying their hardest."

Today, POV employs on-average 12 to 15 for such positions as press operator, sales, design, delivery, binding, billing and receiving, and layout/pre-press.

Lindsey Whitticar, layout/pre-press, has worked at POV the longest, 16 1/2 years. "I started at 19. My mom Diane Hunt was doing their billing and accounting and got me the interview. I love working here. Chris is very personable with our customers and always has their best interest in mind. How he runs the company, and the ethics behind it, are why POV is succeeding. If a customer is not satisfied, Chris will do whatever is necessary to make it right."

Whitticar is a 1996 Cardinal High School graduate and grew up on 10 acres in Huntsburg. She appreciates the company's loyalty to Geauga County.

She describes her job at the printing company. "I take the harder jobs or more timely work that comes in press-ready and look for errors or things that could be an issue. Next, I use imposition software and pull Epsoms for client approval. Troubleshooting at each step, I move the work to plates and organize the work for the pressmen," explains Whitticar. "POV is all about customer service and quality control. We try to accommodate everyone.

Everything revolves around the due date. We try to complete jobs five to seven days after client approval."

POV uses three presses: a Komori Lithrone 5-color press for work 12" X 18" or less; a Sprint two-color press for work 28" X 20" or less; and a Hamada for two-color, smaller jobs like business cards, envelopes and letterhead. Additional equipment includes a Heidelberg letterpress, two digital presses, a Fugi Luxel 9000 for computer-to-plate direct, an Epson 7600 to create plates and a Muller Martini for saddle-stitching.

If a job requires ink on paper, POV is interested in doing the work.

"We won't say no to anything," insists Whitticar. "We are currently busy printing roster books, magazines, newsletters, calendars and catalogs. Whatever the job, we want the best product in the end. If we don't think we can give you the best product, we'll guide you to who can."

Yuhasz concurs, "I think it's important that POV keeps evolving. We have seen a tremendous amount of attrition in the industry today. Fortunately, we began this printing company after the 'fat' years of print. Why have so many printing companies closed their doors? Many did not adjust to technology changes. Others were heavily invested in the web, becoming large on-line monsters which required huge volumes, becoming over weighted on the capital size," Yuhasz reflects. "Growth has been a rollercoaster ride for us. We've been able to buy most of our equipment in liquidation – for pennies on the dollar – which has been very successful for us."

"People still like paper. I like reading on paper. I will print it off my computer first, then read something. Most people want something in their hands," describes Whitticar. She says the company has seen an evolution of print, to on-line publications, to print again.

That's good news for POV print operator Bryan Randolph. The 26-year-old pressman began working at POV at age 17, while a student at Mentor High School. "I took printing in high school which had a mentor program. I just knocked on POV's doors and asked if they were hiring," he remembers

with a chuckle. "I think the quality of printing at POV is excellent. I have learned from the older gentlemen here who have been in the business a long time. I enjoy art and machinery, and this industry requires both skills. I love working at POV. We are like a family."

Fellow POV employee Jack Schmidt found employment at POV as part of an employment program with the Geauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities.


"We are proud to offer employment opportunities to local adults with disabilities through the Metzenbaum Center," Yuhasz says. "We are expanding this partnership, providing space for an on-clave in our new facility. These folks will work on paper products for our recently launched Seven Barks company. Jack has been with us for several years. He does a great job for us. We are proud of our disabled workforce."

Yuhasz considers the future of the industry. "People really like the personal component in business – which is falling to the wayside. I am amazed at the amount of people coming to us because they will get a person on the line. People are not always buying as cheap as possible. They want a fair price, in a reasonable time, by people who will take care of them. Bigger isn't better in our business," insists Yuhasz.

The successful business owner says their new product line, Seven Barks, is selling well in the national marketplace, and people are surprised it is being made in the United States.

Yuhasz says, "It all comes back to being in-tune to the needs of customers, standing behind our product, and doing the right thing 100 percent of the time. Though impossible, it is our goal."

He continues, "We are seeing a resurgence in printing. People are buying. What we have seen between the electronic web market and printing is that people are realizing there has to be a close balance. The web cannot replace print as a communication. The pendulum is swinging back to print. People do not want to read the newsletter on-line. They don't want to sit in front of their computer longer than they have to. And while the 400-page catalog is available online, an abbreviated catalog is available in print. This compliments us well. In the future, we will continue to build the business around what the market is dictating."

When confronted with the question of why local newspapers are closing or reducing daily circulation, the astute businessman poses this question: "Do people really not want to read a newspaper, or do they just not want to read what they are printing – the media bias? I think people are reading when there is something of value to read." 

**They want a
fair price, in a
reasonable time,
by people who will
take care of them.
Bigger isn't better
in our business.**



GEAUGA COUNTY

COMMUNITY

& ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT

A Valued Partner with Geauga Businesses

by Margie Wilber

Anita Stocker sits at her desk this cool spring day and painstakingly looks over real-estate listings of available commercial property in Geauga County. Her near-obsession with staying apprised of commercial property and land is just one way the Director of Geauga County Community and Economic Development (CED) assists manufacturers and business owners looking to relocate into the area.

Stocker, 60, has served as director of this vital department since 1994, totaling 26 1/2 years as a department employee. One of 11 children, she grew up on a family dairy farm in Thompson. She went on to earn a B.A. degree from Lake Erie College. The lifelong Geauga County resident says she never considered living anywhere else.

"I love my job as director of Geauga County Community and Economic Development, and I have a terrific staff that support the goals and programs of this department," Stocker states. "It's been an honor to serve the community in this capacity and watch our manufacturing industries and businesses flourish despite several economic recessions."

Her staff includes Joni Stusek, program administrator; Kelly Belconis, project coordinator; and Kristin Merrill, administrative secretary.

The Geauga County CED develops and implements strategies and programs to retain and expand county businesses and increase jobs. This department administers the popular Geauga Revolving Loan Fund, now 30 years old. Since the program began in 1983, the department has overseen \$16 million in loans through this one program alone.

The Geauga CED serves both businesses and residents. Business services include confidential information and assistance in locating available sites, buildings, financing, and state and local incentives. "We maintain an economic development data base which consists of sites, buildings, financing and other incentive programs which saves business owners time and money," explains Stocker. "When a business is searching for a site or considering leaving the area, we will keep that information confidential. This is particularly important to reduce the rumor mill."

Specifically, Geauga County Community and Economic Development's business services and resources include:

- Low-interest loan funds to county businesses
- Data base of available industrial building sites
- Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB) capability in conjunction with the Geauga County Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)
- Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) tax incentive program
- Site selection
- Assistance in locating Ohio Incentive Programs such as:
 - Job creation tax incentive programs
 - State of Ohio economic development financing

Anita Stocker,
Director of Geauga County CED



We maintain an economic
development data base
which consists of sites,
buildings, financing and
other incentive programs
which saves business
owners time and money.

"We can coordinate local government financing with other government loan programs," explains Stocker. The CED staff routinely assists a minimum of five businesses per week.

There are approximately 300 manufacturers in Geauga County, some one-person shops. According to Stocker, KraftMaid is the single-largest employer with Great Lakes Cheese second, if you discount government and schools. The greatest concentration of manufacturers is the Village of Middlefield which benefits from a concentration of valuable natural resources, excellent infrastructure, and convenient transportation outlets.

"Ben Garlich, mayor of Middlefield Village, could not be more supportive of business and industry. He is eager with a can-do attitude that seems to attract manufacturers to his village," Stocker positively reflects.

Years ago, Geauga CED also formed the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), a nonprofit organization that has the ability to transfer land on behalf of the county commissioners. "It is the instrument which allows businesses to use the Industrial Revenue Bond. You must apply to the state of Ohio, and you need a bonding agent –


which is the commissioners – and CIC is the instrument," Stocker explains. "It's a legal web, but it works. To remain viable as an organization, the CIC must meet four times a year. Since its founding, the CIC has become more of a social organization used for networking as well." Cristine Lewis, of Fairmount Minerals, currently serves as CIC president.

On the residential end, the staff of Geauga CED administers the Septic System Infrastructure Loan Program which helps local residents who learn they must replace their septic – which takes a huge chunk of cash out of a family budget. "Our loan gives residents the ability to stretch out payments though the loan must eventually be paid off in full," notes the compassionate director. The CED also administers the Emergency Repair Program for Geauga County senior citizens age 60 and over. This program enables a senior household to obtain financing for either a furnace, hot water tank, or roof. Applications for the loan are available on their website at www.co.geauga.oh.us/Departments/CED.

Looking ahead, Stocker believes Geauga County's success in retaining and attracting business will continue and keep the business

sector prospering. "The attraction of Geauga County is our long-term stability historically. We help our own through national and state economic instability. How? Local business and industry sit tight through times of economic upheaval. They plan their steps methodically. They remain conservative in their thinking."

"On a personal level, business owners and presidents are on the floor. They know the people who work for them and empower their employees – who are knowledgeable and understand the whole picture when it comes to the manufacturing process," describes Stocker proudly. "Because of this culture, problems are handled immediately. In most cases, business owners view their staff as family. In fact, many businesses are family owned and operated in Geauga County. Family is firmly embedded in every aspect of the business."

She concludes, "While many national manufacturers and businesses have their eye on the prize and look to cash out or gain fame and recognition, Geauga businesses feel a commitment to their employees and community. They love their work. They are in it for the long haul." 



Ace Hardware Comes to the Village of Middlefield

by Margie Wilber

Middlefield Village Mayor Ben Garlich and Ace Hardware manager Susan West snip the chain commemorating the opening of Ace Hardware in Middlefield Village.

E & H Hardware Group opened its 10th ACE Hardware store at 15615 West High Street in Middlefield this February. The opening was marked by a “chain-cutting” celebration attended by members of the Middlefield Council, Economic Development Committee, and community. Mayor Ben Garlich cut the chain along with an ACE Hardware Manager Susan West.

Store hours will be Monday through Saturday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The phone number for Middlefield ACE Hardware is 440.632.0020.

According to Scott Buehler, Chief Operating Officer of E & H Hardware Group, LLC, Middlefield ACE Hardware will make outstanding customer service the focus of their efforts. ACE offers a wide-range of product categories with an updated and improved store layout to the new location. In addition, the full-line hardware store provides plenty of close-to-the-door parking.

“Customer service sets us apart from other hardware stores in the community,” states Buehler.

Buehler continues, “It has been such a pleasure working with Mayor Ben Garlich and Middlefield Village Administrator Dan Weir. The interest they have shown was remarkable. They even visited us before the store opened to see if there was anything else they could do. The local media has also been terrific.”

Craftsman tools, custom color matching with Benjamin Moore and ACE Royal paint plus Clark & Kensington, a paint and primer-in-one product, are available at the store. Joe Byler, previous owner of Joe’s Saw Shop, will manage the Ace Hardware service department. Mr. Byler has more than 15 years of experience with sharpening and small engine repair. The store offers a large selection of outdoor power equipment including a full line of Efco home and professional power equipment.

Services provided will include custom cut keys, computer chip keys, sharpening, screen repair, propane exchange and glass cutting. Fax service and notary are available. A full line of bird feeders and bird food are also available along with carpet machine rental.

www.ACEhardware.com allows customers to special order offerings of over 65,000 items for pickup at their local Middlefield ACE with no shipping charges.




Seasonal offerings for spring will include lawn & garden supplies and chemicals, tools, ACE and Scott's fertilizers, and landscape bagged goods such as mulches, peat moss, topsoil, sand and compost. Craftsman lawnmowers, gas and electric line trimmers and blowers from Craftsman, Homelite, Poulan and more will also be available.

Scott Steele, merchandiser/buyer for ACE, says Middlefield's ACE Hardware offers unique items not sold in other ACE Hardware stores such as tree-tapping supplies, Dickie's clothing, and cast iron pans. "Each community is a little different. We listened to the staff and Amish community to insure their needs were met," explains Steele.

The store employs 15 from a pool of hundreds of applicants. "We were very pleased with the quality and number of good applicants. It was difficult to pick," Steele adds. "Their work ethic sets them apart from other areas we are located in. I am very pleased. They are really nice workers and likeable people."

Garlich notes with a chuckle, "They could have opened numerous stores with the number of applications they received. I certainly appreciate the interest in our community. No guy can live without a hardware store. There has been a void in this community."

"We are here to support you. Shop local!" encourages the Middlefield Village mayor.

E&H Hardware group, a subsidiary of E&H Family Group, owns and operates ACE Hardware stores located in Orrville, Medina, Dover, New Philadelphia, Delaware, Jackson Township, Independence, Rocky River, Westlake, and as of February 2013, Middlefield, Ohio. E&H Family group also owns and operates Buehler's Fresh Foods Supermarkets located in Wooster, Orrville, Wadsworth, Medina, Brunswick, Ashland, New Philadelphia, Dover, Jackson Township, Delaware and Coshocton, Ohio. E & H Family Group is a family owned company committed to environmentally responsible behavior. For more information visit www.buehlers.com. 



Middlefield Village Mayor Ben Garlich

Annexation Allows More Business Growth

Chem Technology's slated expansion was recently made possible through out-of-the-box thinking by Village Mayor Ben Garlich and Village Council.

Chem Technology's initial hopes of expansion on another site faded as it became known the site had elevation issues and inferior substrate. There was also an issue with acquiring the property as it involved two property owners – one of which was unwilling to provide an acceptable price for the land.

Garlich and Village Administrator Dan Weir immediately became involved in discussions as to alternative sites.


"We (Middlefield Village) were in competition with other locations that had much cheaper land costs and were offering higher rates of abatement. Chem Tech is a quality employer, very bullish on expansion, and a tremendous asset to the area in respect to employment and commerce from these employees to local businesses as well as income tax revenue to the Village. We were not going to sit idly by and let them leave the Village," exclaims Garlich.

The Middlefield Village Mayor says the most attractive property for Chem Technology's expansion was not in the Village.

"Historically, the local townships' position have been to block any annexation," Garlich explains. "Geauga County commissioners, in turn, always supported the townships in their decision, so expansion within Geauga County has been nonexistent for years."

Seeing the tremendous hurdle, Garlich and the Middlefield Economic Development Committee went to work, putting a financial package together that would benefit the township and local schools.

"We met repeatedly with each of these entities," Garlich states. "And we were able to show how annexation would be an immediate financial benefit to all parties."

Within four months, Middlefield Village was able to get the property annexed. Chem Technology was able to move forward with expansion plans on this ideal land, and the annexation created additional land as other businesses decide to make Middlefield Village their home. 



COLD NOSE COMPANIONS:



Dog Training Through a Gentle Touch

by Margie Wilber

Can you teach an old dog new tricks?

According to Carol Peter, CPDT-KA, principle trainer and owner of Cold Nose Companions, LLC, the answer is a resounding, "Yes!" And she puts no qualifiers on her answer in regard to size, breed or mix.

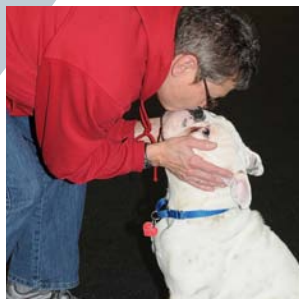
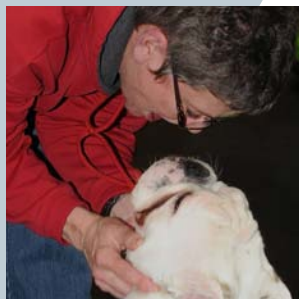
"Positive methods. Positive results. That's our approach," states the 57-year-old business owner. "Of course, sometimes it takes time, depending on the behavior your trying to teach, but I have experienced great success."

Cold Nose Companions, located at 12531 GAR Highway, just 3/4 mile east of the Chardon Square on Route 6, opened in August 2012. Since that date Carol has worked with more than 200 dog owners at the clean, spacious, 4,700-sq.-ft. training center.

Carol admits she is on a mission. "I want to correct problem behaviors so less dogs end up in rescue shelters. The ultimate goal: to help develop a healthy, loving, lifetime relationship between dogs and their owners.

This second career start began after Carol lost her executive position at Key Bank in 2009, after 15 years with the bank, due to downsizing. She was able to use her severance package to start the business.

Carol has always loved dogs but actually discovered her passion for training dogs as a rescue shelter volunteer. Carol became one of the inaugural trainers in Geauga Humane Society's Rescue Village's Homeward Bound program more than 10 years ago, which helped thousands of dogs find and stay in loving, new, forever



Carol Peter, CPDT-KA, owner of Cold Nose Companions with Finnegan

homes by modifying problem behaviors. Her commitment to compassionate, positive training methods led her to achieve accreditation as Certified Professional Dog Trainer-Knowledge Assessed. She has honed these skills through continuing education and practical hands-on work with dogs that have complex behavioral issues such as separation anxiety, fear, reactivity, aggression and destructive behaviors.

"I earned a B.S. degree in Education from Bowling Green State University; however, I never used my education training, finding immediate employment in the marketing industry upon graduating. When the Rescue Village started training us to use positive reinforcement in dog training, it was like a shoe that fit real well. I was also finally able to use some of the education knowledge and training I learned at B.G.S.U.

She continues, "I don't believe negative training creates that loving, lifelong bond owners desire with their dog. At Cold Nose Companions, dog chokers and prong collars are left at the door when class begins."

Carol shares her life and home with two dogs, three cats, and her husband of more than 35 years. She satisfies her passion for animal welfare by volunteering at the Geauga County Dog Shelter and serving on the Board of Trustees for PetFix Northeast Ohio.

Assisting Carol at Cold Nose Companions is Rosanne Hall. Rosanne is also an experienced dog trainer with 11 years of experience working with shelter dogs as a walker and trainer, and as a professional dog trainer at a major pet store chain. Rosanne is also a Certified Professional Dog Trainer-Knowledge Assessed.

Rosanne's passion for dog training also developed as the result of her shelter experience, and the realization that the vast majority of dogs are surrendered to shelters simply because they are untrained. She insists the behavioral issues people cite for giving up their pets – jumping on people, barking, destroying property, pulling on leash, potty training problems, not coming when called and more – all can be addressed by training.

Dogs have been Rosanne's lifelong love, and she has always had rescues. She lives with three – including Finnegan, a deaf, English, bulldog puppy. She also trained with her border collie mix Bailey to achieve AKC Canine Good Citizen and Therapy Dog certification. Together, they visit local hospitals, including Rainbow Babies & Children. "My third dog, Morgan's hyper temperament is not suited for therapy work. But, Morgan has given me valuable first-hand knowledge of how to make even a challenging dog the best she can be," laughs the 60-year-old dog trainer.

Dog Training for Family Dogs

Whether your objective is turning around a problem behavior or starting out on the right track with your new best friend, both women insist Cold Nose Companions can help.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



Rosanne Hall, trainer at Cold Nose Companions works with Finnegan

COLD NOSE COMPANIONS: Dog Training Through a Gentle Touch

A few problem areas commonly addressed:

- ♥ Rowdy behavior, such as jumping, mouthing, stealing and destructiveness
- ♥ Fearful and aggressive behaviors
- ♥ The fundamentals of good behavior to your puppy or adult dog

"Our positive approach motivates a dog to learn good manners with stress-free methods, making good behavior fun and long-lasting," Carol explains.

Positive Methods are Fun for Everyone

Cold Nose Companions encourages the whole family to participate in the dog training. "It's a fun experience and helps your dog build a strong relationship with every member of the family," Rosanne explains.

Cold Nose Companions offers:

- ♥ Rewards-based positive reinforcement training
- ♥ Group classes in a spacious, climate-controlled training center
- ♥ Private training sessions in your home or wherever is most appropriate to your dog's training needs
- ♥ Specialized behavior modification for complex behavioral problems such as reactivity and aggression, fearful behaviors, separation anxiety, and more
- ♥ Behavioral consultation and problem-solving; development of training plans and check point evaluations
- ♥ Expertise of a Certified Professional Dog Trainer

"Group training classes are a fun, social way to train your dog," states Carol. "We offer a wide range of classes: obedience, recreation, certification, special skills, and reactivity. Class size is capped at eight dogs; however, "wall-flower" class and "chill" class are limited to six dogs. Breeds are mixed. The only exception is age;

puppies attend class separately for the socialization education.

Private sessions are also available. "They are all about you and your dog," insists Carol. "In private sessions, you receive 100% of the trainers attention. These private sessions include one-on-one coaching with you and all members of your household either in your home or at the training center."

"We will demonstrate the training process with your dog and then coach you to continue the training. This approach is ideal for owners who enjoy training and working with their dog and just need help getting started; owners who can commit the time for daily practice sessions with their dog; or owners who want everyone in the household to participate in the training," Carol explains.

For folks on the run with little time or aptitude for dog training, customers can leave the training to Cold Nose Companions.

"In this option, we do all the training one-on-one with your dog, ensuring the desired behavior is reliable before transitioning the maintenance of the behavior back to you," says the seasoned dog-training professional.

This concentrated approach is ideal for:

- ♥ Time-starved owners who just want a well-behaved dog
- ♥ Owners who are overwhelmed by their dog's aggressive or reactive behavior
- ♥ Owners with physical limitations that make the training process difficult

The Problem Pup


Does your dog react aggressively to other dogs or strangers; or is he/she so overly stimulated that social interaction with people and dogs can appear aggressive? If you worry about visitors to your home or taking your dog out into public and being able to handle him, "Chill!" just might be the class for you and your dog.

The Chill class was developed to address these specific behaviors.

It's not all work at Cold Nose Companions. The fun-loving business owner has sponsored special events such as "HOWL-o-Ween" in October and "Picture Your Dog with Santa" for dogs and their owners. "More than 38 dogs were photographed within four hours at this December event which was really quite remarkable," chuckles Carol, reflecting back. More social events are being planned for 2013-2014.

Carol encourages people to stop by any time they see the "Open" sign illuminated on the center. Training center hours are subject to change on a week-by-week basis, but generally are:

Monday	5:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Tuesday	2:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday-Thursday	12:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Friday	12:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Sunday	1:00 - 6:00 p.m.

For more information or to schedule training, please call Cold Nose Companions at (855) 286-DOGS (3647). 



“Education is the foundation upon which we build our future.”

Kent State University’s Geauga Campus and Regional Academic Center faculty and staff embrace this concept; however, the real gift is their encouragement to be a lifelong learner and ability to connect to each student. The Geauga Campus has always been touted as Geauga County’s public university with a private school approach. Set on a sprawling farmland setting next to Geauga County Fairgrounds, students experience a family-oriented, student centered staff and faculty who integrate a civic mindedness and celebrate success stories.



Committed to excellence in education, they move beyond the classroom while listening, encouraging, and guiding each student. They take into consideration all the factors involved in attaining a degree and how that relates to their families, jobs, and social life. It’s this commitment that must reside in both the student and the institution.

For the university, success is not defined only by the completion of a degree program; its meeting student needs, guiding them in overcoming challenges, learning new skills, and discovering how education is changing them. With those changes, student often develop and set new goals. Success also involves faculty integrity and commitment in providing an education that prepares students to enter professional careers as competent individuals. The scheduling committee takes into consideration everything from scheduling classes at convenient times to offering more web-based and hybrid classes. Maintaining a state of the art facility that keeps pace with changing technology are no less important, along with offering degrees that are relevant to the job market.

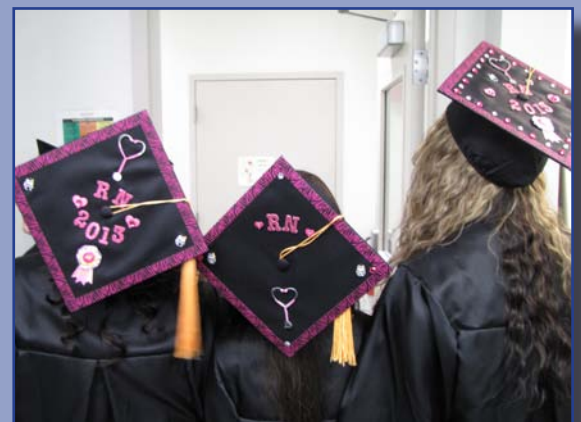


SUCCESS

The regional campus has always been known for its diverse mix of traditional and nontraditional students. Those lines of distinction have increasingly become blurred as “traditional” students coming right out of high school are learning to balance work and their class and homework schedule. Success for the student comes with the commitment to persevere.

With the campus preparing to celebrate its fifty-year anniversary in 2014, the administration is not only planning a yearlong celebration of its past, present and future; we are pursuing more integral partnerships and strengthening community outreach with business, industry, and organizations.

EXCELLENCE



Excellence in everything; that’s Kent State University.



WEATHER WARRIORS :

TURNING MOWERS INTO MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR BUSINESSES

by Beth Hallisy



All successful business owners will tell you they've weathered some storms. But when owners of Ohio landscaping companies and garden centers tell you the same, they mean it literally. Weather – too hot, too cold, too wet, or too dry – wreaks havoc for these weather-dependent businesses.

According to Erik Draper, a Geauga County-based commercial horticulturist with The Ohio State University Extension, weather and the ebb and flow of discretionary spending are the biggest challenges these companies face. He estimates there are 60-75 landscaping and gardening businesses in our agrarian county. It seems we grow a lot of resiliency here.

It's not just the challenges associated with physically growing material and getting the work done; weather affects customer mindset. "When you have conditions that don't favor outdoor living, it slows things down," says Draper. People just don't think about their decks, patios, lawns and gardens when it's cold. Or snowing. Or pouring down rain. Or even too hot.

"Weather is without a doubt our number one challenge," says Bob Bremec, president and owner of Bremec Garden Centers, based in Chesterland. "We have to prepare for plan B every day." Bremec says he has two to three plans he can choose from every morning; he waits until the last minute to determine what will go on sale.

Bremec, like many others, started his company with a pickup truck and lawn mower. That was

in 1983. Thirty years later, he is managing a landscaping business and two garden centers (the second in Cleveland Heights) and is the largest distributor of pottery in northeast Ohio. Pots abound in the pottery chalet. Every size, shape and color.

"This is a competitive business," acknowledges Bremec. "To survive, you have to establish niches." His company started specializing in container gardening about four years ago and that line of business has really taken off. Bremec's also features a pond shop and a fountain studio. Over the years, the store has developed creative customer loyalty programs, too. The Bremec Bonds program, which occurs each year in February, gives customers significant discounts when they pay ahead. Aside from rewarding good customers, the bonds help the company manage cash flow in slow periods. The company's Extraordinary Garden Club is truly extraordinary with more than 10,000 members. It gives customers four percent of their total spending back in gift certificates.

In addition to hard work and ingenuity, the company's growth has come through acquisition. In 1987, Bremec bought Thomas Nursery and eventually changed the name and moved his primary business to that location, where it remains today. In 2009, he bought Heights Garden Center, located on Cedar Road near South Taylor. Employing up to 65 people in prime season, Bremec attributes his success to having the "right employees in the right spot." He says his employees – many with him from the start – are the backbone of the company.



"You need a core group who know how you think. They can make decisions for you and be responsible for those decisions," Bremec insists.

Wayne Impullitti, owner and president of Impullitti Landscaping in Burton, concurs. He employs about 100 people in varied positions. "We hire landscape architects and horticulture graduates from Ohio State and Kent State... But finding people with the right background and experience is definitely a challenge," Impullitti says. No doubt, hiring challenges can cause heartburn but they don't trump the weather. "A manufacturer can produce 24-7," Impullitti suggests. "We have these little windows of opportunity... the remainder of the time the ground is frozen, it's too wet, it's too cold, it's too hot... There are all these things you have to dodge around." But there are silver linings.

"I get great satisfaction from completing a project start to finish," says Impullitti. "The fun part of the business is trying to solve problems and meet budgets," he says. "I love what I do and I really treasure all the relationships I've developed over the years." He also says he feels privileged to have seen some of the most beautiful and historical properties in this area.

Impullitti, who graduated from The Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI) in 1984, became sole owner of the business in 1990 after working under the tutelage of his father for years. Impullitti proudly recalls his father starting the business in an 800-sq. ft. garage behind the house.

Now in its 61st year in business, Impullitti owns 35,000 square feet of building on 10 acres. On January 1, the company completed the purchase of Wheeler Landscaping of Bainbridge, marking the company's fifth acquisition since Wayne Impullitti assumed control of the company. Starting in Highland Heights, the company has moved four

times since its founding to accommodate expansion. Impullitti attributes his staggering growth to serving his clients well.

"We try really hard to make our clients happy," Impullitti emphasizes. "We stick to schedules," he offers as an example. "A lot of people can't do that." Like the other business owners we talked to, Impullitti guarantees everything. "When we make mistakes, and we have, we quickly rectify the situation to our customer's satisfaction."

Breezewood Gardens is no stranger to nice stories either. Owned jointly by Doni Kay, David Kay and Whitney Kay Ickes, Breezewood is a destination garden center in Bainbridge on Route 306, aka "Garden Center Row."

The store – now a floral shop, gift and apparel store and full design-build landscaping business in addition to the garden center – was previously owned and operated for 38 years by Richard Kay, a certified nurseryman and landscape technician, who sadly died from cancer in 2004 at the age of 53.

Similar to Bremec's and Impullitti's, the Breezewood operation started small (three employees) and grew considerably, now employing 65 people in peak season, most of whom are long-termers. Also like its two peer companies featured here, Breezewood serves a broad, diverse and growing customer base, with the highest concentration coming from points east. And yes, the garden center faces similar challenges, weather at the top of the list.

"The weekend weather in May can make or break a year," laments Doni Kay, wife of founder Richard. "If we have a rainy May, we can't make up that lost business." But the rewards are many insists son David, who studied horticulture at The Ohio


State University. "We have a great, fun staff," he says. "And we're fortunate to always be around pretty things." Because the business is seasonal, things change all the time. To the Kays, that's a plus. "The fall's probably our favorite time," says Doni. But then immediately notes the beauty and blessings of the other three seasons.

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TOO HOT...

In 1999, the company completed its ninth addition, a premier showroom designed by the world renowned garden center architect Ernest Wertheim. One of Breezewood's niches – and a huge business success – has been its extensive clothing line. Customers can

find unusual items – many associated in some way with gardening and outdoor life – not available elsewhere in the area.

Breezewood – as well as Impullitti and Bremec – can just about fill a stadium with all the awards and recognitions they've received over the years. They take pride in their work, their employees and communities, each giving back in significant ways.

It's not hard to understand why they've been so successful. They tend to their gardens. 

WomenSafe & The Green House: A Shelter of Hope

by Margie Wilber

“I never liked being called horrible names. I never liked being pushed, slapped, kicked, choked or punched. I never liked having loaded guns held to my head or inside my mouth, and I certainly never liked the constant threat of being killed if I ever left. It started with name-calling: him telling me I was stupid, I was dumb, and then it progressed into degrading names and physical abuse. He would always apologize and somehow turn the blame on me.”

“Each time I was physically abused, it took away from my self-esteem. There were times I hid in the woods for hours to escape what I knew was coming. Imagine being thrown around a room, having your head pounded on the floor, being choked till you fell to the floor, and being dragged out of bed to have your face rubbed in dog feces. All of this done by someone that says they love you and promises to never do it again.”

“A friend had told me about WomenSafe and urged me to call them for help.”

- The beginning of a survivor's story

WomenSafe is a non-profit organization that offers information, counseling, education, referrals and support to victims of domestic violence. Women, men and children from northeastern Ohio receive services, and those who have experienced any form of domestic violence at any point in their life are eligible for services. All services are free of charge.

WomenSafe is perhaps best known by Geauga County residents for providing shelter to abuse victims fleeing violence in their homes. The 32-bed shelter, named The Green House after philanthropist Roe Green, located at 12041 Ravenna Road in Chardon, offers a safe and comforting environment where victims begin to heal, receive counseling, consider alternatives and develop goals for an abuse-free life. All basic necessities are provided. Resident care workers and volunteers provide 24-hour support to shelter residents.

In 2012 more than 3,300 bed days were provided to victims in shelter – an increase of 1,000 days from the previous year – and nearly 100 children called the shelter “home.”

In addition, WomenSafe provides a 24-hour support and crisis management hotline, COPEline 888.285.5665, where victims of domestic violence receive support, access to shelter and services, and information and referrals to community resources. The hotline is also recommended for friends and family who need more information about domestic violence, available services, and how to help a person in need. Nearly 2,200 calls were handled by trained advocates and volunteers on the COPEline in 2012.

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of physical, emotional, and coercive behaviors that one family member uses to exercise power and control over another. Most perpetrators of abuse and battering are a spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, girlfriend, ex-girlfriend or lover. In 92 percent of the reported cases of domestic violence, victims of abuse are women and children.

“Boys in our society are overwhelmed with influences outside of the home – from friends, the neighborhood, television, the internet, music, movies... the list goes on. Every day they hear numerous messages about what it means ‘to be a man.’ Many of those messages reflect that they have to be tough and in control. Some messages are much more harmful than that,” remarks Shayna Jackson, MSSA, LISW-S, Executive Director of WomenSafe. “In nearly 90% of cases of domestic violence, the perpetrator is male.”

Jackson says, "The good news is that the great majority of men do not mistreat the women in their lives. They are good husbands and fathers, respectful partners, caring sons, brothers and neighbors. Time and time again, the men in our community have come forward to help WomenSafe in its mission to provide emergency shelter and support services to survivors of domestic violence throughout Northeast Ohio." This includes establishing an "Engaging Men" Advisory Council in 2013.

According to Jackson, abuse can be physical, emotional, verbal, sexual and financial. Physical abuse takes many forms including hitting, kicking, burning, squeezing, hair pulling, and throwing objects. Emotional abuse includes isolation, ridicule, intimidation, and criticism. Verbal abuse includes blaming, yelling, and insulting. Sexual abuse can be forcing unwanted sex acts, abuse if you withhold sex, constant sexual demands, and prohibiting the use of birth control. Financial abuse includes demanding an account of all expenditures, taking keys or purses, controlling the money, and destruction of property.

*Shayna Jackson, MSSA, LISW-S,
Executive Director of WomanSafe*



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The Pattern of Abuse

A batterer can be hard to detect at the onset of a relationship, but domestic violence does build in a clear, charismatic pattern. The woman is effectively brainwashed through a series of steps. What are these steps? Andrea Gutka, M.Ed., CHES, director of Public Relations at WomenSafe, explains.

"The batterer degrades her into believing that she is incompetent and incapable of managing the simplest tasks of daily life or personal interactions. When she expresses dissatisfaction or unhappiness, he convinces her that she is to blame. He makes her believe that if she would only change, if she would only do as he says, their life together would be perfect and happy," Gutka states. She says in most cases the abuser will create separation with his victim and her support system. He will expect the woman to keep him informed of her whereabouts at all times. Inordinate and often delusional jealousy characterizes the batterer.

"The batterer may find a way to keep the woman exhausted and/or hungry. He may deprive her of her sleep or food. He may insist on keeping very late hours and awaken her in the middle of the night or early in the morning. He may involve her in a project such as building a new home or starting a new business, or keep her

overwhelmed with social or business activity, which require long hours or intensive physical labor," Gutka

explains. "The result – her thinking becomes chaotic."

She says the batterer will often encourage a woman to become alcohol and drug dependent as a way to control her and keep her dependent on him as the source for providing drugs and/or alcohol.

"Once she is separated from friends and family, located in unfamiliar surroundings, convinced that she is incompetent to function fully as an adult, and dependent on him for all her needs, she is truly his hostage. Now the physical violence begins," Gutka cautions.

Battering typically starts with irrational arguments followed by mild threats. It escalates to shoving then pushing, hitting and slapping. It grows progressively more severe until it includes hitting with heavy objects, using or threatening to use guns, knives or other weapons, choking, stabbing, and other life-threatening acts. Somehow, the victim still thinks she can use reason or logic to make him stop. This is unreasonable and illogical. She never made him start, and she cannot make him stop, insists Gutka.

According to Gutka, the batterer says and does things that make the woman accept feelings of guilt for causing the abuse in the relationship. He tells her that it is all her fault or that she is in some way to blame for his abusive behavior.

Many people, including victims themselves, may ask, "Why would someone stay in a violent relationship?" Here are some barriers victims face when they consider leaving a violent relationship:

- **Fear:** "I fear my abuser will just continue to find me." Women are at a 75% higher risk of being killed by their abuser than those who stay.
- **Economic dependence:** "Who will support me and the children?"
- **Parenting:** "The children need both parents."
- **Religion/Culture:** "You get married, for better and for worse."
- **Loyalty:** "They're sick. If he had a broken leg, or cancer, I would stay with him: this is no different."
- **Savior complex:** "If I stay, I can help them get better."

- **Pity:** "I feel sorry for him."
- **Fear of his suicide:** "He says he'll kill himself if I leave."
- **Denial:** "It's really not that bad."
- **Guilt:** "This is all my fault."
- **Responsibility:** "I have to save our marriage."
- **Shame/Embarrassment/Humiliation:** "No one can know."
- **Identity/Security:** Many women feel that they need a man to be complete.
- **Optimism:** "Things will get better."
- **Low self-esteem:** "It must be my fault. I must deserve it. I will never find anyone better. A little love is better than no love."
- **Community Resources:** Resources for victims may not be well known to victims. "Where will I go?"
- **Isolation:** "There's no one around here to help me."
- **Normal behavior:** "It's all I know." If a victim was raised in a violent home or has lived years of abuse, she may find the behavior to be normal.

- Court Advocacy
- Hospital Advocacy
- Relocation Assistance
- Aftercare Services
- Community Education

Jackson began working at WomenSafe in 1997 as a child therapist. Today, the executive director cannot imagine working anywhere else.

"I love my job. This is an enormously rewarding career, and I consider myself incredibly lucky. I landed in a field that is a great fit and one I am passionate about. I love the people I work with and together, we can impact our community." She says the Green House typically runs at 75 percent occupancy, providing shelter in 2012 for approximately 160 people. The average length of stay is 59 days.

Funding this outstanding organization is a continuous concern for Jackson and its 27-member, volunteer Board of Directors. To offset diminishing Federal and State funds, in December of 2011, WomenSafe opened The Resale Shoppe, located at 12601 Chillicothe Road (in the Drug Mart Plaza) in Chesterland. With generous funds from The Lake-Geauga Fund of The Cleveland Foundation and Fairmount Minerals, the store raised more than \$65,000 in its first six months to support the shelter, providing a venue for the overflow of donated goods received and offering job experience to WomenSafe clients in need of developing skills for employment.

"First and foremost, community donated goods continue to be made available to WomenSafe's clients, who are provided vouchers to go 'shopping' in the store to acquire the items they need. The variety of additional items are for sale to the public at drastically reduced prices. The profits support the agency's mission," explains Renee Petro, Director of Development for WomenSafe.

Geauga County's business community has been very responsive in support of victims of domestic violence, and financially supportive of the mission of WomenSafe, according to Jackson.

Partnering with Business

"We look to local businesses as a partner in helping victims of domestic abuse," states Jackson. "Geauga businesses generously provide a variety of in-kind assistance and financial support to WomenSafe and offer their employees awareness initiatives through WomenSafe within their companies. For instance, Aqua Doc donates the maintenance of WomenSafe's front pond; Flambeau donated \$10,000 to provide computers and other technology for the agency; Fairmount Minerals donates both funds and time to help WomenSafe accomplish its mission; and Pentair donated \$10,000 to support WomenSafe's efforts. We also appreciate when they cover topics of domestic abuse in their in-house business newsletters."

Jackson says, "The WomenSafe staff welcomes an opportunity to offer on-site training and help local businesses develop a safety plan at their plant. If a worker or employer suspects someone has an unsafe arrangement, we want to help."

"WomenSafe, in its 34th year, provides critical support and resources to women, men, and children whose daily lives are filled with fear," concludes Jackson. "With increasing clarity, we are learning that domestic abuse is NOT a women's issue, but a societal issue that demands all of our attention and commitment. Over the last year, with the help of a very generous community, more than 160 adults and children are safer today than they were before they fled to the emergency shelter at the Green House. An additional 2,850 individuals received free counseling, art therapy, legal advocacy and education aimed at helping them heal and rebuild lives free from violence."

Of the 27 individuals employed by WomenSafe, 14 are full time and include counselors, therapists, an art therapist, social workers, a public relations specialist, development professionals and managerial staff.

If you or your business would be interested in scheduling a speaker, volunteering, or making a donation, please call WomenSafe at 440.286.7154 or visit www.womensafe.org.

Services Provided

"The vast majority of domestic violence victims flee to the safety of the Green House shelter with nothing but the clothes they are wearing," Jackson describes.

WomenSafe provides a wide range of services to meet the needs of Geauga County residents as well as those from surrounding communities. These services include:

- Diagnostic Assessment
- Counseling
- Case Management
- Peer Support Group
- Art Therapy

University Hospitals Gauga Medical Center helps Gauga County earn its first “healthiest county in Ohio” ranking

*Community partnerships, over 400 free
wellness events in 2012 impacted result.*




The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program – www.countyhealthrankings.org – in March ranked Gauga County the number-one healthiest county in Ohio. The annual survey assesses every county across America according to documented health data including mortality; morbidity; health behaviors; clinical care; social and economic factors; and physical environment. 2013 marks the first time Gauga County has topped the list of 88 Ohio counties.

The number-one ranking comes three years after University Hospitals (UH) Gauga Medical Center began working with the state’s Center for Health Affairs to determine the health and wellness needs of Gauga County residents across all age groups, behaviors and environments. “Following those results, in 2010 we aligned with our community’s nonprofit organizations to start a healthy county initiative,” says Paula Leonette, RN, Corporate Health and Community Outreach Coordinator, UH Gauga Medical Center. “We began with senior centers and some of our corporate partners to offer free, on-site health screenings, wellness fairs and education programs focusing on four areas – nutrition, exercise, life purpose and socialization.”

After one year of targeted health and wellness programs – complemented by annual hospital events like the Women’s Health Expo and Family Health and Safety Day – requests for more community programs increased dramatically throughout the county and region UH Gauga Medical Center serves. In 2012 the hospital delivered 419 free wellness events in partnership with dozens of organizations, from Chardon Schools, the Gauga County Sheriff’s Office and Department on Aging to the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society and Arthritis Foundation.

More than 700 free health screenings were performed at last July’s Family Health and Safety Day alone. “Preventive screenings and risk assessments for stroke; cancers; respiratory and vascular problems; and hearing and memory loss are essential to enhancing wellness,” says David Kosnosky, DO, Internal Medicine physician and Chief Medical Officer at UH Gauga Medical Center. “Our teams are committed to being proactive when it comes to the well-being of our community.”

“Our goal is to maintain our ‘healthiest county in Ohio’ status,” says Leonette. “We’ve just begun working on an initiative called ‘Healthy Gauga,’ in collaboration with the Gauga Park District, Gauga Board of County Commissioners and Kent State University Gauga campus. We believe in University Hospitals’ mission of ‘To Heal, To Teach, To Discover.’ We truly want to provide the resources that enable our residents to be well.”

M. Steven Jones, President of UH Gauga Medical Center, emphasizes that the hospital’s wellness outreach commitment is just beginning. “We’re in the middle of a journey. It’s an ongoing effort here to identify and address the wellness needs of our region. We’re rededicating ourselves to empowering our community when it comes to lifestyle issues like chronic disease management, weight loss, smoking cessation and substance abuse. To accomplish this, our partnerships with Gauga County leaders and organizations will continue to deepen. Collaboration is critical. Good health does not occur in a vacuum.” 

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**DON'T MISS A
SATURDAY OR
YOU'LL MISS A LOT!**

- Fresh fruit & vegetables in season by local growers
- Organic produce in season by local growers
- Hand-made soaps, jewelry & crafts
- Local cheeses, honey & maple syrup
- Amish breads & pastry
- Nuts, popcorn & kettle corn
- Cotton candy & beef jerky
- Fresh flowers and plants
- Free health screenings and informational booth sponsored by University Hospitals/Geauga Medical Center
- Local chefs cooking fast, nutritious meals & snacks
- Balloons, clowns & entertainment for the kids

Parking is free.

Middlefield Farmers Market

9 a.m. to noon | Saturdays beginning July 6 through September 28
Mineral Lake Park on Sperry Lane in the Village of Middlefield

Each Saturday will feature a special event.

Pie Eating Contest... Junior Chef Cook-Off... Carnival Rides

Saturday, July 6 will include *Carnival Rides, Fireworks*, and more *Independence Day fun.*

