



Improved DDA Website to Launch

New look, easier to use!

The Delhi DDA Website has been undergoing a transformation in recent weeks, making it a more useful tool for both the public and the DDA. The new site is slated to be unveiled later this month.

The purpose of the site has always been twofold: to keep local residents and businesses informed, and to promote the advantages of Delhi Township to businesses looking for a desirable place to locate. The new site will make it easier for users to find what they're looking for, and includes a "real time" calendar with up-to-the-minute updates. You'll also be able to follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

We think you'll like the new and improved site.

Check it out at delhidda.com!



Please help the hungry



HOLT COMMUNITY
food bank

Hunger in our community is no longer limited to the areas the food bank has served in the past, says John Busley, chairman of the direct mail envelope campaign for the Holt Community Food Bank. "It's much more widespread now—including neighborhoods where you would never expect to see it."

The number of recipients is up dramatically this year as well—a 38 percent increase over last year, says Busley. "The number of people served has increased more than we expected. And the scary thing is, we expect the numbers to continue to grow next year. We have to be ready for that."

Thanks to the generosity of Delhi residents, the HCFB raised \$34,000 throughout last year, including the envelope campaign. This year, their goal is to increase overall fundraising by nearly 40 percent. The HCFB's envelope campaign begins in November and wraps up at the end of the year.

The HCFB is an all-volunteer organization. Ninety-five percent of the money raised goes to purchase food for the needy.

Please help. Send your tax-deductible donation by check or money order to:

Holt Community Food Bank, PO Box 577, Holt, MI 48842

Correction

In the last issue of Our Town, we incorrectly identified Steve Anderson and Jessica Nance's insurance agency. They own and operate Advanced Insurance Markets, 1969 Cedar St., Holt, 699-0467. Watch for their website at www.greatagency.org, coming soon. We sincerely apologize for the error.

OUR TOWN

Premier Delhi Business Expo is October 21

The expo will allow area businesses to communicate and collaborate on ways they can work together during these challenging times.

The first Delhi Township Business Expo will be held Wednesday, October 21st, at Holt High School.

The expo will allow area businesses to communicate and collaborate on ways they can work together during these challenging times. It will also give local residents an opportunity to become acquainted with the variety and quality of products and services offered by Delhi businesses. There is no charge for this event, either to the businesses participating or those attending.

The expo promises to be both entertaining and informative. Jane Aldrich, a favorite local TV personality, Holt resident and entrepreneur, owner of Joyworks (joyworker.com), will serve as the keynote speaker. The businesses will then have time to meet with one another before the expo is open to the public.

Visitors are welcome at 6 p.m. and will be able to purchase food and beverages at the Expo, as well as participate in drawings for promotional giveaways provided by area businesses.

The tentative Expo schedule is as follows:

- 3 p.m. - 4 p.m. Business booth set up
- 4 p.m. Introduction and welcome - Stuart Goodrich
- 4:15 p.m. Keynote Speaker - Jane Aldrich
- 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. Business networking
- 6 p.m. Doors open to public
- 8 p.m. Expo closes

If you haven't already registered your Delhi Township business for this event and would like to participate, please contact Sherri Powers at the DDA at (517) 268-3063.

Pets are Family at Willoughby Pet Clinic

"We take a lot of time to understand what's going on and get to know the owners and their pets.

We take the initiative to make sure a pet is healthy and content for the rest of its life."

Dr. Mari Nicol understands that, for many of us, our pets are like family—and she and her staff treat them accordingly. Working under the philosophy, "We are never too busy to see your pet," Dr. Mari says, "We take a lot of time to understand what's going on and get to know the owners and their pets. We take the initiative to make sure a pet is healthy and content for the rest of its life."

Willoughby Pet Clinic specializes in small animal medicine, so most of its patients are dogs and cats, but, says Dr. Mari, "We've been known to help out a rabbit, hamster or guinea pig, too."

Whatever the animal or its needs, Dr. Mari's goal is to work with the owner to ensure a significant difference in their pet's quality of life. Like people, pets are living longer now, and Dr. Mari says there are many new developments in veterinary medicine that will help pets stay healthy and happy for many years.

The clinic's services include routine vaccinations and physicals, behavior consults, diagnostics, dental cleanings, and small animal surgery. They have a laboratory and pharmacy onsite, and drop-off care is available for busy owners.

Dr. Mari also distributes a free educational newsletter, Pawsitively Healthy, that includes information on pet health and wellness, behavior and other timely topics. Dr. Mari graduated from the Michigan State University Veterinary School in 1983. She joined Willoughby Pet Clinic in 1990 and ultimately purchased the practice. "I feel very fortunate to have a career that I still enjoy after 26 years," she says. "My days are never boring."

In addition to Dr. Mari, the clinic has eight employees—and, of course, the office dog, Marley. Clinic hours are Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., and Saturday hours are available from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm by appointment.

Willoughby Pet Clinic is at 4685 Willoughby Road, 694-2171.



Nu You Hair Studio

“Holt seemed to be a prime location to open a business. It has a smaller-town feel but is so easily connected to other areas.”

Diane Sible, owner of Nu You Hair Studio in Holt, has always loved to style hair.

“I had such a passion for it that I tried to get into cosmetology school during my junior year of high school,” Diane says. “but I had to wait until my senior year to be accepted.” She has now held her cosmetology license for 31 years, and still loves her work. “It’s very creative. And you get to do what you love all day, talk to different people, and provide a service that’s going to make them happy.”

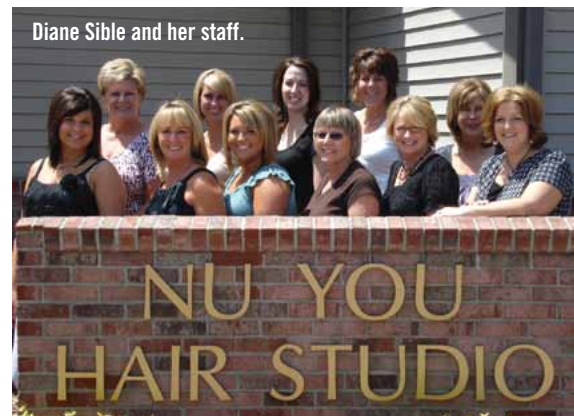
Diane moved to the Holt area from her hometown, Houghton Lake, soon after finishing cosmetology school. After working for a couple of area salons, she had a vision of opening her own, and did so in 1992. “I wanted to open a clean salon that had a fresh perspective, and fill it with energetic stylists like me, who had the same passion I did,” she says. “Holt seemed to be a prime location to open a business. It has a smaller-town feel but is so easily connected to other areas.”

Within a few years, Diane was ready to expand the salon’s services, and moved just around the corner to a larger space. Nu You offers hair styling, waxing, manicures, pedicures, acrylic nails, make-up application and up-dos for special occasions. It also offers something many other salons do not: an air purification system. “We are innovative in this respect,” says Diane. “We use it to keep chemicals out of the air. You will never walk into our salon and be bombarded by the smell of product.”

Diane also strives to make her clientele feel right at home. “I’m fortunate to have a staff who not only get along great with one another but also are very upbeat, positive people,” she says. “From the second guests walk in the door, they see a lot of smiling faces. It’s such a positive atmosphere they can’t help but feel at home.”

Making sure every guest is taken care of is a priority for all the stylists at Nu You. “Everyone says ‘hi’ to everyone’s clients,” Diane says. “At the end of the day, it makes us feel like a million bucks, knowing that people have left our salon feeling better about themselves, more confident in how they look and feel.”

Nu You Hair Studio is at 2375 Delhi Commerce Drive, Holt, 699-1900.



Holiday TV campaign to promote Holt businesses

Patronizing Holt businesses isn’t just good for the local economy—it’s just plain good shopping! For the past several holiday seasons, the “Shop Holt” TV campaign has spotlighted the great variety of goods and services available here in Delhi Township.

Once again the DDA is offering Holt businesses the opportunity to participate in cooperative holiday advertising, with the DDA underwriting part of the cost.

Each commercial package consists of 42 30-second TV spots with a “Shop Holt” theme, and features two non-competing businesses. This year’s campaign will air on Fox 47 between November 2 and December 24.

These packages have sold out quickly in the past, so if you think you might be interested, or would like additional information, be sure to contact Don Garchow of Fox 47 as soon as possible. His direct line is (517) 702-3124.



Victory Lane Quick Oil Change

The quick oil change with a difference!

The décor at most oil change shops consists primarily of a paint job. Not so at Victory Lane. Mounted along its walls are several fish, countless deer, a bear and a turkey. “They are what I like to call a conversation starter,” owner Bob Fillion says. “Oftentimes, on the next visit, people bring in pictures of their own.”

Also unique to Victory Lane, Bob feels, is the way he treats his customers. “People develop a good relationship with us, and they find they can genuinely trust us,” he says. “We go above and beyond in service, because sometimes it’s not about the money. Sometimes you do things because it’s the right thing to do.”

With every oil change at Victory Lane, customers can expect to have their car windows washed and fluids checked and topped off for free. Flat tires are fixed free, too.

Bob also tries to make customers feel at home. He makes sure the shop is stocked with suckers for children who come in, and keeps treats on hand for any dogs that happen to be along for the ride. Customers are free to get out of their cars while work is being done, so Bob makes sure the shop is kept very clean. “Just because we change oil, it doesn’t mean that there has to be oil everywhere,” he says.

In addition to oil changes, Victory Lane offers automatic transmission flushes, radiator flushes, manual transmission fluid changes, differential services, belt replacement, fuel system cleaner, and an 18-point inspection. Despite the available services, Bob never wants a customer to feel they are being pushed into having work done. “People often feel like mechanics are pushy,” he says. “I pride myself on my customers trusting the recommendations I make for their car and their safety,” he said. “If I notice that something is wrong, I do bring it to their attention, but I never make them feel like they have to get a service done the same day, or they have to get it done by me.”

By offering great service, Bob has been able to maintain a steady increase in customers each year since Victory Lane opened eight years ago. “We have 87 percent repeat business, which is great,” he says. “It means something to me that people trust us and enjoy coming to our shop. I get a lot of pride out of a customer smiling as they exit our building.”

***Victory Lane Quick Oil Change is at
1910 Cedar St., Holt, 699-5880.***



Gordon, Shawn and Chad—ready to serve you.



Holt Kroger shoppers will soon be able to refill their gas tanks at the same place they refill their cupboards. And the more they spend in the store, the more they’ll save at the pump.

Tom Frank, regional real estate representative for Kroger, says the new fuel station in the Kroger parking lot will reward loyal store customers with reduced pricing. “The more you spend with us, the bigger your reward on the fuel,” he says.

The station sign will show the street price, but customers who swipe their Kroger Plus Card will get an automatic three cent per gallon discount. On top of that, explains Tom, there is a points reward system. “For example, if you spend \$250 in the store in a month, you’ll get 10 cents a gallon off the next four fill-ups the following month.” The discounts increase with in-store spending, with an additional five cent per gallon discount for using a Kroger credit card to buy gas. Depending on their monthly spending in the store, Tom says, “Customers could save as much as 55¢ a gallon on four fill-ups.”

The tanks are already in the ground, and Tom hopes to have the fuel center open by late October or early November, depending on the weather. The new center will serve up to six cars at a time, and will have a kiosk that will sell only cigarettes, lottery tickets and some candy bars. While Kroger is open until midnight, the fuel center will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Kroger is in the Cedar Park Shopping Center at 2495 N. Cedar Street, at the corner of Cedar Street and Willoughby Road.

Kroger Fuel Station





**FITZGERALD HENNE
& ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Fitzgerald Henne & Associates

Fitzgerald Henne & Associates (FH&A) has provided environmental assessment, civil engineering, landscape architecture and land surveying since 1992. FH&A began as an environmental company doing ground water clean-up, but eventually shifted the focus to storm water management, green design, runoff reduction, rain water retention and stream water restoration.

“We recognized that sometimes it’s better to treat water at its source rather than handle the end-of-pipe issues,” president Greg Minshall says. FH&A works primarily with municipalities and governmental agencies, including MSU, LCC, City of Lansing, City of East Lansing, and the Eaton and Ingham County Road Commissions. They also handle storm water management for 10 of the county drain commissioners in lower Michigan. They focus on clients within an hour to hour-and-a-half drive, because beyond that, Greg says, “it’s tough to give that personal service.” In fact, accessibility to the highway was one of the factors in the move to Delhi from Lansing in 1999. “If you have survey crews, their ability to get on the highway and to the site quickly is an economic benefit,” Greg says.

Though the founders are no longer part of FH&A, Greg says, “We kept the name; we value our reputation.” Of course a good reputation is important to any business, but Greg explains that it’s crucial to firms like FH&A who don’t obtain work exclusively through a bid process. “Clients are encouraged to use qualification-based selection (QBS), because they’re dealing with professional services that go way beyond low price,” Greg says. “You want experience and qualifications and people you know can do the work and stand behind it.” That’s why the FH&A team use their professional designations after their names. “The PE designation means we are licensed professional engineers, and we make sure that our surveyors are licensed professional surveyors. That’s all-important in our business.”

FH&A is a closely held corporation with 18 employees. While the economy in Michigan has impacted their workload, Greg says they feel fortunate to have a good base of clients. “We are doing what we can to help out by keeping our costs down and provide the same level of service,” he says, “and we’re ready, willing and able to serve when our clients have a little better financial footing.”

While the economy in Michigan has impacted their workload, Greg says they feel fortunate to have a good base of clients... “We are doing what we can to help out by keeping our costs down and provide the same level of service,” he says.

***Fitzgerald Henne & Associates
is at 3125 Sovereign Drive,
Suite D, Lansing, 887-1100.***

Welcome Project Nearing Launch



The Kiwanis formed a Welcome committee—a group of volunteers who will personally meet and welcome newcomers to our community.

Moving to a new community can be exciting but also a little overwhelming. In addition to getting to know people, newcomers have to establish a whole new array of places to get things done—from banking to barbering.

Earlier this year, the Holt Kiwanis Club—a service organization dedicated to helping the community—decided to help ease the way for new Delhi Township residents and businesses alike. The Kiwanis formed a Welcome Committee—a group of volunteers who will personally meet and welcome newcomers to our community.

Welcome volunteers will present new residents and business owners with a “goodie bag” filled with useful items, including money-saving offers and a community directory where newcomers can find the services and information they need. The volunteers have undergone background checks and are currently going through training. The program is expected to kick off later this fall.

J.R. McGraw of McGraw Law Firm is leading the project, and reminds local business owners that it’s not too late to donate promotional items for the goodie bags, or to have coupons or flyers tucked into the community directories, for a \$50 one-time fee. If you are interested in more information about having your business represented in the Welcome packets, please contact J.R. at 694-6529.

Business Census Yields Valuable Information

The Delhi DDA would like to thank all the businesses who participated in our recent business census. Your responses will be valuable in helping us review our current programs and determine how they might better suit your needs. The survey results will also enable us to better understand your concerns as business owners and to develop additional ways the DDA might help address them.

Sherri Powers of the DDA visited each business personally to gather information and familiarize business owners with current DDA programs which might benefit them. While 92 percent of respondents expected their business to grow within the next five years, many cited factors they considered obstacles to that growth. These included the current economy, difficulty in marketing effectively, not having a Web site, difficulty retaining dependable employees, and being unable to compete with nearby businesses due to lack of advertising. The DDA will use this information to develop new programs and initiatives to help alleviate some of the things that have been impeding the growth of local business.

According to the survey results, 100 percent of Delhi businesses who responded said they now have a better understanding of both the Commercial Rehabilitation Rebate Program (CRRP) and the Biz Buzz program. In fact, 83 percent said that they would take advantage of the CRRP in the future, and 73 percent said they would take advantage of the Biz Buzz program.

If you would like to take advantage of these programs, or would like more information about them, please call the DDA office at (517) 699-3866. An updated list of all the Delhi DDA businesses is available at delhidda.com.



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New Life Fitness Comes Home to Holt

Grant Pierce and his brother and sister-in-law, Vern and Grace Pierce, have a passion for fitness—and they’ve turned it into a successful business. In 1992 the trio opened World Gym in Holt’s L&L Plaza, then relocated to the Jolly/Cedar area in 2003. Now they’re back in Holt, and they couldn’t be happier about it.

“We’ve gotten an overwhelming response,” says Grant. “It’s a wonderful location, and I am thrilled to be back in this area. We went to school here and we love the community.” Since opening in the Cedar Park Center at Cedar and Willoughby in July, they’ve attracted many new members, and many familiar faces from the earlier days in Holt are back as well.

Grant says they fill a niche in Holt, providing the only fitness center in the area. “We offer the latest line of strength and resistance equipment and computerized cardiovascular equipment,” he says, including Stairmasters, ellipticals, treadmills and bikes. New Life offers plenty of amenities, too—HD televisions throughout the gym and cardio area, beautiful locker room facilities, a pro shop and tanning. Certified massage therapists are available by appointment, and there’s even free on-site child care.

“Everybody should make exercise a part of their life,” Grant says, and the Pierces try to make that easier for busy people. The gym is open seven days a week, from 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and until 9:30 p.m. on Fridays. Weekend hours are 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The Pierces are also committed to making sure their gym is clean, friendly, and non-intimidating. Their sales staff is not on commission, so there is no pressure to join. As Grant says, “I really do invite people just to come on in and take a look around.”

New Life Fitness is at 2495 Cedar Street, Holt, 517-889-5612.



Stone Circle Bakehouse Uses Biz Buzz to Take Bakery to Next Level

It was Kevin Cosgrove's experience buying bread as a hotel food and beverage manager that first piqued his interest in becoming a full-time baker.

So in late 2007, he began learning to make bread himself, taking courses on the subject and attending classes hosted by master bakers.

By December 2008, Kevin had decided to "quit his day job". With support of his family, he became a full time baker, building a bakery-complete with a full-scale woodburning oven-in the side yard of his home. In the first couple of months of being in business, with only one wholesale customer, "I had a lot of self doubt," Kevin says, as he tried to build a customer base and expand the business.

Shortly after, Kevin learned of the Delhi DDA's Biz Buzz program and decided to give it a try. He was pleased by the positive experience he had with Tom Donaldson, of the LCC Small Business and Technology Center. "I was really jazzed after talking with Tom," he says. "He was knowledgeable, skillful, and helpful. After our first meeting I was energized by the suggestions he had for my business."

Kevin's meeting with Tom provided him with valuable ways to communicate to retailers the benefits of carrying his products. This helped Kevin get several small accounts that now offer his fresh-baked product on a regular basis—including Foods for Living, Goodrich's, and Darrell's in Mason. He has even developed a connection with food services at Michigan State University.

"Tom helped me take a hard look at who my competition was and the ways that I am both similar to and different from them," Kevin says. "I was able to recognize the benefits a company could gain in selling my product."

Tom also helped Kevin find ways to get his products out where the general public could enjoy them—including selling them at local farmers markets. "I was surprised by the over-the-top positive response I got from customers at the farmers markets," he said. "I didn't realize people were so passionate about bread."

Kevin is looking forward to meeting with Tom again to further utilize his expertise in small business. "Tom is an observer," Kevin says. "He can offer advice and critique the way things are operating because he's an expert who can look at things from an outside perspective." Kevin adds some advice for his fellow small business owners in Delhi: "Businesses should meet with him just to make sure that they are doing everything they need to be doing to drive their business to the next level."

Stone Circle Bakehouse is at 3647 Willoughby Rd., Holt, 881-0603.



Kevin Cosgrove

"I was really jazzed after talking with Tom," he says. "He was knowledgeable, skillful, and helpful. After our first meeting I was energized by the suggestions he had for my business."

For more information about the DDA's Biz Buzz program for Delhi Township businesses, contact Al McFadyen at 699-3866.



OURTOWN

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THE DDA – WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) promotes economic development through business attraction/retention programs and works to foster investment within the DDA district. It strives to increase the Township's tax base and strengthen the local economy while maintaining those qualities that make Delhi Township a desirable place to live and work. For more information, visit us at www.delhidda.com.

To contact us: Al McFadyen, Executive Director
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(517) 699-3866 or (517) 699-3867
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