

OUR TOWN

Welcome to Our Town!

Welcome to the first edition of Our Town, a newsletter for residents like you from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

“Many local residents don’t fully understand how the DDA works within the community,” says Al McFadyen, DDA Executive Director, “and this newsletter is designed to help. We hope Our Town will serve as a bridge between the DDA and Delhi residents.”

Jane Olney, a member of the DDA, explains, “We are involved in projects that make a very real difference to people in our community.” She adds that the DDA not only helps attract businesses to the community, it helps local businesses resolve some of the challenges that affect their success. “By sharing first-hand experiences and success stories, we hope to help residents understand how the DDA works on their behalf.”

From new businesses coming into the township to new development and renovation to conversations with local business people, Our Town will keep you informed. We hope you enjoy it.



2004 Festival Bigger than Ever...

Six years ago, with some financial support from the Downtown Development Authority, a number of Holt business people and Mark Jenks of Delhi Township organized and hosted the first Holt Hometown Festival. It started small--just a little entertainment and some business walk-thru booths in the Holt Plaza at Holt and Aurelius Roads. In its second year the Festival grew larger, adding a parade and moving the site to the then Holt Senior High School (now the Holt Junior High School), where it has been held ever since.

The 2004 Holt Hometown Festival will be held Saturday, August 28, and promises to be the biggest yet. The large tent will feature performances by several bands and dancers. There will be a classic car show (benefitting the Holt Food Bank), a soccer tournament, the “Corporate Cup” competition, a kids’ inflatable area, a 5K run/walk (for the March of Dimes), business tents and vendors, and many more events and activities throughout the day and evening.

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DEDICATED TO HELPING OUR COMMUNITY & ITS BUSINESSES GROW

A publication of the Delhi Charter Township Downtown Development Authority



Ron and his family live in Dimondale and his two children graduated from Holt Schools. Ron has contributed to Holt School baseball, gymnastics and softball, saying, "We try and help the community out." His daughter, Gennene, is now Kitsmiller's general manager and his son, R. J., is service manager. Ron's wife, Debbie, works in sales part-time.

Investing in the Area

While many people know that Kitsmiller's is a family business, they probably don't know just how far back it goes. It began with Ron Kitsmiller's paternal grandfather, who owned a mobile home manufacturing plant in Williamston.

He then started a mobile home business where Ron's mother, Beverly, worked. She and Ron's dad married, continued to work together, and ultimately took over the business, switching to RVs.

Ron got his start in the business at the age of 10 or 12, washing RVs, and went on to work in service. The business was sold in 1970, but in 1981 Ron reopened on the south side of Lansing. In 1995 he moved to his current 3 acre site in Delhi Township, and he is pleased with his decision to relocate. "We like the Holt-Mason area. It's easy to get to, yet it's kind of out in the country, too." He also likes working with the Ingham County Sheriff's Office, which he says has been very helpful.

Ron is now ready to expand, and has been working with DDA Executive Director Al McFadyen in connection with the Commercial Rehab Rebate Program (CRRP). This grant offers any retail, commercial or office facility in the DDA district a 40% rebate, up to \$20,000, for exterior renovations. This includes landscaping, parking, signage, and almost any type of exterior renovation. Al commented that this is "their tax money at work."

Ron is currently purchasing 5 acres behind his site, which he plans to turn into an improved display area. Permit issues have complicated and delayed the renovation process, but Township Supervisor Stuart Goodrich helped Ron work through the Township issues, and is now working with Ron and the Ingham County Drain Commission to resolve any remaining issues so excavation can begin. Ron is grateful to Goodrich as well as to Bob Scheuerman, Township Engineer; John Elsinga, Township Manager; and Rob Lewis of Timberland Real Estate Services for their assistance and guidance. "If it wasn't for these people, I don't know what I would have done," Ron says.

As soon as the permits are in order, work will begin on excavation for the parking lot and renovation of the office space.

Renovation of the service and parts departments will follow after Labor Day. Ron's plans include an 11,000 square foot service facility, expanded parts and service departments and office space, and more and better customer parking.



Share Your Thoughts and Make a Difference

As we continue the exciting process of developing a Cedar Street Corridor Plan, we recognize the most effective way to understand and evaluate specific issues is through first-hand discussions with the public. Please plan to attend a Cedar Street Corridor focus group meeting at Charlar Place. Your input and expertise are invaluable!

EVENING SESSION:

Wednesday, June 30, 2004, between 7-8:30 p.m.

MORNING SESSION:

Thursday, July 1, 2004, between 7:30 - 9:00 a.m.

Supporting Your Local Sheriff

NEW FACILITY SET TO OPEN DOWNTOWN ON JULY 1st, 2004

Two years ago, when the Township started exploring options to ease overcrowding at the Community Services Center, moving the Sheriff's Office was the obvious choice, says Sheriff Gene Wriggelsworth. The Sheriff's Office is independent from the Township, but occupied 3,500 square feet in the Community Services Center. So the Township approached the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and asked them to take the lead in finding a new site for the Sheriff's Office.

In the process, the DDA created a solution that will serve all parties involved for years to come. In May, 2003, the DDA purchased the old Eagles facility, which had been vacant since a fire in 2002.

Although the building had been gutted, the superstructure was sound. With funding from the DDA, an addition and extensive renovation began. The result will be a 6,200 square foot facility which will house the Sheriff's Office and the DDA, with room for future expansion. The new facility will be ready for occupancy in July.

Al McFadyen, Executive Director of the DDA, says, "Everything in the building has been designed with a lot of input from the Sheriff's Office, making it custom designed for their use. It's a great way to reuse the building, it's a good investment in the community and it's a good investment for the DDA."

The DDA will lease the property to the Township, which in turn contracts with



the Sheriff's Department for services and acts as landlord.

"There are many things that the Township gets involved in that we provide additional services for," says Sheriff Wriggelsworth. "Our dog handlers are up there, our divers go up there and that's part of the package" that was attractive to the Township, the Sheriff added. Along with their regular duties, the Sheriff's Office provides a D.A.R.E. Program, a business officer and three community police officers.



And the Survey Says...

Out of 3,000 random households, over 1,200 Holt residents responded to the National Citizens Survey.

The survey is designed to measure satisfaction with a wide variety of factors which contribute to quality of life in the area.

Survey respondents gave Holt the highest ratings in the areas of overall appearance, a sense of community, and openness and acceptance. A sense of personal safety ranked high, with 82 percent of respondents reporting feeling "somewhat safe" to "very safe" from violent crime. The survey also indicated strong support from residents for the township board's commitment to public safety, including the hiring of

community policing officers and the addition of a full-time fire and EMS staff.

In the ratings, Township employees scored above the norm for responsiveness, courtesy and overall impression. Three areas were rated as major concerns: run-down buildings, weed lots/junk vehicles, and the balance between residential and commercial growth.

Overall, township officials are pleased with the survey results, while acknowledging that there are always things which need to be improved upon. They note that this initial survey provides a baseline for measuring progress in making Delhi an even better place to live.



2004 Festival Bigger than Ever (continued)

HOMETOWN FESTIVAL 2004

Saturday August 28th

8am Soccer Tournament Begins
9am 5K walk/run Begins
10am Vendor Booths Open
10:30 am Kids Parade
Noon Car Show, Kids' Inflatable Area, Entertainment Tent, Corporate Challenge Start
10:15pm Fireworks

Chuck Grinnell of Holt Shoe and Leather Repair is the President of the Holt Hometown Festival Committee, and he says that each year, the event gets bigger and better. Last year the funny drag strip/rail cars came on board, and they will be part of the fun this year as well. The Holt Kiwanis Club will offer their famous Chicken Bar-B-Q, the Junior Rams football games will be in the stadium, and Chuck is working on an even bigger parade. He is also laying the groundwork for a "Holt Idol" competition. And as they have done for the past four years, the Downtown Development Authority is sponsoring a wonderful fireworks display to top off the day's festivities.

In addition to Chuck, the Holt Hometown Festival Committee consists of vice president Amy McNamara of Dart Bank; secretary Dan Reinecke of Jackson National Life Insurance; treasurer Tammy Fulton, a self-employed accountant; Steve Anderson of Advanced Insurance Markets, Ltd.; Carrie Breslin of Dart Bank and Kari DeRosa of Sweet Sensations; Mike Fickies, retired; Randy Fisher and his wife, Kathy; and Mark Jenks, Delhi Township Parks and Recreation Director, whom Chuck credits as having "one of the best crews I've ever seen."

The Festival started out as a thank you to all of the people who support the businesses in Holt, and it's turned into a showcase of Holt.

"It takes a lot of work and people to pull this off," Chuck says. "If we didn't have the support of the Township Board, police and fire, Parks & Rec, the school district and the DDA, trust me, this thing would not happen. It's a town event, meant for everyone in the town."



THE D.D.A. — 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 which make Delhi Township a desirable place to live and work.

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THE D.D.A. BOARD MEMBERS:

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Stuart Goodrich, *Supervisor*
C. Howard Haas, *Chairman*
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Jane Olney
Sally Rae, *Treasurer*
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