

## Elkhart's Small Business Incubators

**Lexington Business Centre**  
*www.lexingtonbizctr.com*

**Eastpoint Business Centre**  
*www.eastpointbizctr.com*

# LEDGER

## EVENTS MARCH 18

6-8 p.m.  
*SBDC/SCORE  
Workshop  
"Starting  
Your Own Small  
Business"*

**APRIL 15**  
6-8 p.m.  
*SBDC/SCORE  
Workshop  
"Preparing Your  
Business Plan"*

**MAY 13**  
6-8 p.m.  
*Workshop  
"Starting  
Your Own Small  
Business"*

*All workshops  
are conducted at  
Elkhart Chamber  
Cost for each: \$25  
(pre-registered)  
\$30 at the door  
Call  
574-293-1531*

### About the Centres

Lexington Business Centre and Eastpoint Business Centre are dedicated to providing a diverse sustainable environment in which new and emerging companies can develop and achieve growth, with the end result being profitable businesses, job creation, capital generation, economic diversity and a positive impact on the Elkhart Community.

The Centres are managed by: Tiedemann Group  
421S. Second St.  
Sixth Floor  
Elkhart, IN 46516  
574-522-0390



### **The variety of Eastpoint**

Nan Greer (furniture for horse trailers), Mark Fessenden (management counseling) and Jim Cobb (heating, air conditioning and restaurant equipment) represent the variety at Eastpoint.

### What'll it be for Biz Centres in 2004?

## Forecasts range from 'OK' to 'great!'

Talking about the new year with several tenants of the incubators is like a breath of spring. Times may have been a little rough, but they are better now, and they are going to get really good pretty soon.

Optimism? You can find it in bulk at Lexington and Eastpoint. Even where business is "spotty" or "iffy" right now, the outlook seems great.

Take Nan Greer, for instance. The year at **Innovative Seating and Design** (furniture for the horse trailer industry) "started a little slowly ... in January, we operated on a day-to-day basis; whatever we had to do, we did."

But on the very day in early February that The Ledger visited to talk about 2004, Greer had a call from "a good customer that he anticipates doubling his demand" for Innovative's product.

**Sales  
a plus  
230%!**

Mike Lese admits that it will be tough for Quality Wine & Ale Supply to equal its tremendous first year at LBC.

"A piece of news like that tends to brighten your day," Greer said with a smile.

Over at Lexington Business Centre, Quality Wine & Ale Supply set a standard for itself in 2003 that Mike Lese says he can't realistically expect to equal this year. Total sales were up 230 percent for the company, which does the bulk of its business through the Internet.

"Everything came together for us," says Lese, who is in partnership with brother Mark, "and a key was being here (at LBC).

**continued on page 3 Outlook '04**



### **Some voices from Lexington**

It's pleasant to talk about 2004 with Karen Shackle (Junior Achievement), Larry Springer (tag engraving), Tom Stewart (gauge repair) and Mike Lese (wine making supplies). They're doing good things — and hearing good things from others.

## Expansion



Mike Lese poses among some of the wine-making and brewing paraphernalia that's available in Quality Wine & Ale Supply's new walk-in shop. The firm came to Lexington Business Centre about a year ago, doing business primarily via the Internet. At the time, Lese said he planned to make use of the door onto Elkhart Avenue. Temporarily, Lese's sister, Sandra Clark, has the shop open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays, and Lese handles it from 10 to 4 Saturdays.

# Take a spin in our webs

By CARL TIEDEMANN

Loads of great things are going on at the Business Centres. For example, we have launched our new web pages as part of the new Tiedemann Group web site. Please visit the new sites at [www.lexingtonbizctr.com](http://www.lexingtonbizctr.com) or [www.eastpointbizctr.com](http://www.eastpointbizctr.com), give them a tour and let us know what you think. I would appreciate your comments.



The Michiana MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) Chapter has started a new Self-Employment Training and Support Program titled ASSETS. One of the components of the program is a 13-week, 25-session course, which teaches the basics of setting up and running a small business. At the conclusion of the 13 weeks, the participant will have completed a business plan workbook which will serve as his blueprint for the development and operation of his business. We are supporting this effort by donating the use of the Lexington Business Centre Conference and Training facility. The classes are currently under way and well attended. If you would like more information on this business plan course, please contact me or ASSETS Elkhart County's executive director, Wendell Wiebe-Powell, at 574-361-8213 or by e-mail at [wendelw@assetsekhart.org](mailto:wendelw@assetsekhart.org). I am very pleased to support this program as it is a good place for a small business person to learn about developing a business plan.

Again this year, our Ledger editor, Jeff Gillaspay, has interviewed tenants at the Centres to get their take on the state of the economy and how they predict their business will be in the year ahead. The good news is everyone is getting back to normal after the past couple of slow years and predicting good times in the year ahead. I, too, predict a better year based on the sales and activities at the Tiedemann Group business units. Let's hope we are finally out of the recession.

I would like to welcome the new folks we have at the Centres and wish them the best of success. We have featured some of them in this issue of the Ledger. We'll have more to report on them in the spring issue. Isn't that a pleasant thought: SPRING!!!

## Advertise in The Business Ledger

Contact: Karen Freshour 574-296-1313

### The Business Ledger

is published by the Tiedemann Group  
421 S. Second St., Sixth Floor  
Elkhart, IN 46516

Contact: Jeff Gillaspay, 574-296-5876



Mark Fessenden

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## INCUBITS

### Items of more than passing interest

Three of the gang at Lexington Business Centre refuse to let winter rob them of golf. **Keith Berg, Dave Jenkins** and **Larry Springer** have been hitting 'em straight since mid-January and plan to do so through the spring thaw, in a league of simulated action at Flagstix. Through the wonderful world of electronics, they play some of the great courses, nine holes a week.

"It's fun, and it'll do until the real thing comes back," says Springer.

Speaking of sports, **Jim Cobb** of Laro Corporation, headquartered since October at Eastpoint Business Centre, is one of the dwindling breed of fast-pitch softball players in the Elkhart area. A third baseman, he already is looking forward to the new season.

"I have nothing against slow-pitch for those who want to play it," he says, "but I hate to see the decline in popularity of the fast game."

The voice-mail message from Lexington tenant **Matt Grantham** was delivered in a plaintive, almost pleading, tone: "We've been moving huge amounts of snow. I haven't slept in about 30 hours. I'm going to bed. I'd really love to talk to you. Could we do it next week?"

Snow management is Grantham's winter alternative to his warm-weather lawn care business.

The "**Bolt**" in Bolt Document Management is the name of a 17-year-old greyhound, the pet of company owners **Cathy and Jeff Nelson**. "Bolt" was rescued after a distinguished racing career. "Bolt" isn't just a name for the company, either; the dog is a friendly presence at the Eastpoint office every day.

**Nan Greer** faces one of the pitfalls of success. The Eastpoint digs of **Interior Seating and Design** have become cramped. "I'm going to have to talk with Carl (Tiedemann)," she said. "We need to do something."

E-mail your "Bit" to [jgillaspay@fedmed.com](mailto:jgillaspay@fedmed.com).

## Today's tenants

Incubator Tenants at Lexington Business Centre: AFLAC, Alternative Business Solutions Inc., Century Tel, Dawn Realty Inc., E&W Sales, Greenleaf Services, Impact Graphics, Indi-Cal Corp., Junior Achievement, KB Sales Co. Inc., Pegasus Stringed Instruments, Pixey Enterprises, P.M. Buttons & Embroidery Inc., Poly-Stitch, Precision Home Builders Inc., Precision Wire Die Inc., Pro-Line Enterprises, Inc., QP Inc. Dosity Meters, and Quality Wine & Ale Supply LLC.

Incubator Tenants at Eastpoint Business Centre: Bolt Document Management, Do Group Systems Inc., Fessenden Management Counseling, Homestead Finance Corp., Innovative Seats and Design, Laro Corporation, P.T. Services Inc., The Hope Builders Group Inc., and Wise Electric Inc.



Cathy and Jeff Nelson of Bolt Document Management

## Control your information — or you will drown in it

Jeff Nelson of Bolt Document Management says he loves doing demos because peoples' eyes light up when they see the amazing things that can be done in electronic storage and movement of information.

Jeff and wife Cathy recently moved from downtown quarters to become the newest tenants at Eastpoint Business Centre, occupying 3,100 square feet. "We knew that we were going to need space, and we took all that Carl (Tiedemann) had available.

### Bolt Document Management

Cathy and Jeff Nelson  
Suite 180  
Eastpoint Business Ctr  
574-522-6569  
[jnelson@getbolt.com](mailto:jnelson@getbolt.com)  
[cnelson@getbolt.com](mailto:cnelson@getbolt.com)  
fax: 574-522-1378

The occupancy by Bolt means EBC is full. Bolt was started in 1995 as a retail computer company, and the Nelsons converted to document management in 1999. There was about a year of transition time, going to school, learning document scanning:

"There was a big learning curve."

They're still learning — when the Nelsons talked with The Ledger, they had just returned from a week of advanced training in California.

"This is such a powerful tool for controlling information," says Jeff Nelson, "and if you don't have control of your information, you'll drown in it." He emphasizes that Bolt is in the business not only of archiving info but managing it as well.

The company is serving all kinds of business, in both the private and governmental sectors, in five states. "There are so many regulations — new ones coming out all the time — governing how corporations must handle their documents ..." says Cathy Nelson.

"Properly handling of information gives you time back," says Jeff Nelson. "You don't waste it shuffling through stacks of paper. And if information is lost through mishandling, what's that going to cost you."

## Remodeling

### Helping with an incubator elsewhere

CONSTANTINE — Who better than FM Construction to remodel a downtown Constantine building to accommodate a small-business incubator. After all, two incubators — Lexington and Eastpoint — are members of The Tiedemann Group, which also includes the building firm.

Tom Muckel, FM project manager, worked with Constantine planners and was hands-on involved in putting the building (approximately 2,000 square

feet) on Main Street in shape to house small businesses in their formative phase of development.

Muckel himself gutted the building ("It was a real mess inside") and did much of the work himself. He turned over the building early this year.

Muckel said there is are a maximum six tenant spaces in the incubator building, with two front units having windows on the street. There is an apartment

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was taken off, which left more time to concentrate on marketing and advertising, which Lese thinks were the keys to 2003's success.

"And we're better able to serve customers from here," Lese says. "Most orders received by 10 a.m. go out the same day." Quality W&A ships all over the country and into Canada and Puerto Rico.

A new local twist this year was the opening of a walk-in entrance on Elkhart Avenue (see Page 4). Lese hopes to get a couple of parking spaces on the street for the convenience of customers.

"2003 was a phenomenal year," says Lese, "one that would be very hard to duplicate. We think 50 percent over last year is attainable."

Here are reports from other tenants of the two Business Centres:

• **Mark Fessenden**, a successful businessman long before he opened his management counseling service at Eastpoint, began offering a program in sales development in 2004. The second class began early in February.

The classes, with between eight and 10 students, are conducted in the Eastpoint conference room, where physical improvements were made to meet Fessenden's class needs.

• At **Laro Corporation**, which moved from downtown to Eastpoint in October to escape crushing overhead, **Jim Cobb** says, "We haven't been really busy (since the first of the year, but we're not dead. People are learning we're here, and we're getting walk-in traffic. Come spring-time, we'll be covered up with restaurant equipment business alone.

Next fall, we hope to have more heating and air conditioning business ...."

• Over at Lexington, **Larry Springer** of **E & W Sales** says things started coming back for his tag engraving business in the last quarter of '03. "What we're really waiting for is the new industrial construction to come back again," Springer says. "I'm really optimistic for the remainder of 2004."

• **Karen Shackle**, the **Junior Achievement** exec whose office in LBC also serves as that incubator's administrative hub, says, "Overall, the feeling I'm getting (from the business leaders with whom she communicates) definitely is one of optimism — immediate and long-term. Probably 95 percent of what I'm hearing is that everything seems to be on the upswing."

"You have something like 911, and everyone stops and sends everything to New York City," Shackle observes. "That stands to reason. It takes a couple of years to recover from something like that. This year, for the first time, we (JA) are in better shape fiscally than three years ago."

• **Tom Stewart**, a Lexington tenant whose **Indi-Cal Corporation** specializes in gauge repair, sales and training, says "the volume of business is there; now if the customers would just pay a little faster."

Stewart is optimistic: "I have some good regular customers, and I think there will be more. This year could be a really good one."