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The economy is creating opportunities for some businesses in Wallingford

September 15, 2009 - Connecticut

Downtown Development

Wallingford experienced the closure of several businesses within the downtown area as a result of the current economic downturn which has led to and made room for a number of existing business expansions and an influx of new owners and new businesses. Judy Johansen, owner of Brick Alley Boutique, recently relocated her trendy women's clothing store from a side street within the downtown to a vacant storefront along Center St. for greater exposure. According to Judy, since the move her business has doubled with most of the growth coming from new customers. Jake's Tavern at 179 Center St. is currently expanding into an abutting storefront formerly occupied by the Equamex Market. Equamex Market, an Ecuadorian market, recently relocated around the corner into a larger storefront at 24 South Orchard St. Serenity Salon and Day Spa, at 118 Center St., expanded into an adjacent vacant storefront and opened Escape, a new yoga center. Earlier this month, Christian Rao, owner of Caf   Ra on South Broad St., also expanded into the downtown area, opening a take-out caf   at 350 Center St. Christian also has plans to open a full service restaurant within the downtown at 9 North Main St. in the coming months. Two existing downtown businesses have new owners and new names. Cheri's Hair Salon at 26 North Colony St. has a new owner and is now called Anna V's. The Toy Box at 12 Center St. also has a new owner and a new name, The Nifty Thrifty Thrift Shop.

Commercial and Retail Development

On the commercial and retail sides, the same phenomenon is occurring. Business closures, although painful, have made room for existing business expansions. Kirtas Technologies, Inc. recently expanded its facility at 10 Fairfield Blvd. by 2,500 s/f. Kirtas provides high speed, top quality digitization of books and bound documents for organizations, institutions and companies. Verizon Wireless held a ribbon cutting and grand reopening for its recently redesigned call center at 20 Alexander Dr. REM Vocational Services, a vocational and day support program for individuals with special needs located at 44 North Plains Industrial Rd. is currently expanding into 8,000 s/f of abutting vacant space. Lifetiled, a web designer, recently relocated into a larger facility at 314 Main St. in Yalesville.

During the summer, Wallingford's Planning & Zoning Commission approved an expansion for two commercial establishments along Rte. 5. In July, Holiday Cinemas Stadium 10 at 970 North Colony Rd. received Planning & Zoning Commission approval to construct a 5,681 s/f addition to accommodate two additional theaters. According to the owner, Robert LaFlamme, the additional theaters will show films of an artistic venue. In August, On-Track-Karting, an indoor go-cart racing facility at 984 North Colony Rd. received Planning & Zoning Commission approval to construct

200-300 ft. of track outside the 63,000 s/f facility for use during warm weather months. The expansion would consist of a loop extending out from the existing track through a pair of 7-by-22 ft. doors and running through a portion of the parking lot and then reentering the building. The outdoor track extension should be ready by the spring of 2010.

Manufacturing

Aloka Co. Ltd., one of the oldest ultrasound diagnostic manufacturers in the world, recently expanded its sales and distribution center at 10 Fairfield Blvd. by 5,220 s/f. The Tokyo-based company develops equipment that is used during surgical procedures to monitor the flow of blood. Locally, Aloka equipment is used in the emergency room of St. Francis Hospital, the obstetrics and gynecology department at Middlesex Hospital and by the trauma surgeons at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Aloka employs 1,200 people worldwide.

Boardman Silversmiths recently relocated to Wallingford, occupying 12,000 s/f at 22 North Plains Industrial Rd. The company dates back to 1798 where T. D. Boardman established a pewter and silver business in Hartford. As other Boardman artisans entered the business in various places around the northeast, the Boardman name became renowned for its incomparable quality and fine craftsmanship. Because the company employs skilled master craftsmen, there are no assembly lines, no supervisors - each artisan maintains total control of the custom pieces they create throughout the entire production process and each piece is a work of art. Most of Boardman's work involves the production of custom, one of a kind items such as sports trophies (Stanley Cup, Super Bowl, PGA, World Series, etc.) and corporate custom recognition gifts. Boardman Silversmiths employs 22 people.

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