

Business Beat

Creativity, Freedom Spur Local Entrepreneurs

By ROBERTA E. CANNON

In the middle of the downward spiral of an ailing economy, a bright light still flickers in the minds of entrepreneurs.

Due to the remoteness of the Cape and the absence of large companies, entrepreneurship will always be prevalent here, according to Wendy Northcross, CEO of the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce.

For some, entrepreneurship is rooted in the need to be a stay-at-home parent; others are motivated by their creativity and desire to have their own business.

One of the biggest challenges that also is part of the allure of entrepreneurship is the process of going from an idea to an actual product or service, said Mary Wilson of Centerville, who is in the middle of starting her third business.

"There is a little fear, too, as exciting as it is, that you will fall flat on your face," Ms. Wilson said. "There is still something that drives you."

Her new business, FlipChix Inc., involves a portable flip-book studio that she and her business partner, Kathe Medwin of Centerville, will bring to various events such as weddings, post-prom parties and family reunions. The concept of the flip-book is based on elementary animation or child's play-drawing stick figures on pieces of paper and then flipping the pages to watch the stick figures move. The women will videotape people in a portable booth dancing, acting or moving in some other manner. Using still photos of the video, the women create a flip-book.

"This is the time to start businesses like this because people are looking to be entertained in tough times," said Ms. Wilson.

Another advantage to entrepreneurship is the ability to work according to your schedule while continuing to work your traditional job, she added.

Another product of entrepreneurs is Bella of Cape Cod, which was started a few years ago by Megan Murphy of West Barnstable and Catherine Bean of Osterville.

It has grown from selling jewelry out of their homes, to a booth at Dick and Ellie's Flea Market in Dennis, and eventually to a small storefront in Hyannis and a lucrative Internet business, all based on the allure of bangles.

"What woman does not like jewelry?" asked Ms. Murphy.

All of their jewelry and accessories including handbags, wallets, totes and scarves, sell for \$25 and less.

One of their signature pieces is the sterling silver starfish on grosgrain worn around the neck. Each ribbon is named for a Cape town.

The success of their business has evolved as the two women realized more potential. At the flea market they asked shoppers to give them their e-mail addresses, and they developed a web-site so shoppers could purchase gifts during the off-season.

With those e-mails they came up with the idea to have online e-parties. They invited shoppers to host parties online and keep 20 percent of the sales.

"The web-site is the easiest form of business," said Ms. Murphy.



LAURA M. RECKFORD/ENTERPRISE

Entrepreneurs Kathe Medwin, left, and Mary Wilson, both of Centerville, have created a new business FlipChix Inc. Here they hold a flip-book of still photos created from video.

'The entrepreneurial spirit still lives.'

S. Michael Baker, a SCORE counselor.

Their e-mail listings have grown from 250 to more than 10,000 contacts. They also hold online fundraisers and have raised \$20,000 for area charities.

The success of their growing business has been noticed by BusinessWeek magazine, and the two entrepreneurs will be interviewed for a story this week. Their business is also featured in the 2008 "Marketing for Dummies."

On the green side of entrepreneurship is Wavyo, Beyond the Bag, an Internet business selling reusable bags made of recycled plastic that was started a year ago by Tina Toran of Mashpee and two friends from New Hampshire.

"We all love bags, and we all have this creative side we want to nurture," said Ms. Toran.

The bags can be used for groceries or purses and have the texture of durable, heavy canvas. Their designs are created in limited editions of 100. The three friends plan to expand their product line to include yoga bags, computer bags and other types.

"This is a journey ... something we are enjoying," Ms. Toran said.

For those seeking advice and

counseling to start a new business, support and help is available.

The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce offers business counseling, as well as links to other resources that provide services.

Another resource is the Cape Cod chapter of SCORE, Counselors to America's Small Businesses, an organization in Hyannis comprised of businessmen and women, including retired executives, who provide counseling and assistance with business plans, financial management, marketing plans and e-commerce. Those wanting to start a business or who are currently in business can get free advice from counselors. Additionally, the organization offers workshops and training.

"Lots of people who come in are ambitious and highly motivated but lack the guidance to turn it into a business," said S. Michael Baker, a SCORE counselor. "The SCORE counselors are able to provide that guidance. One of the uplifting things in this [economic] environment is to go into a classroom of people who want to start a business. The entrepreneurial spirit still lives."

Cape Cod Entrepreneurs Weekend

In the spirit of promoting entrepreneurship on Cape Cod, the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Cape Cod Technology Council, Coastal Community Capital, the Cape Cod Young Professionals, and the Cape Cod Focus Group, will present a Cape Cod Entrepreneurs Weekend at Cape Cod Community College, this weekend from today through Sunday.

Developers, designers and marketers will be in attendance. Entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to pitch their ideas, which will be voted on. The top ones will be selected, and teams will spend the weekend creating a company from concept to launch.

Companies will be judged at the end of the weekend on their likelihood to succeed; prizes will be awarded.

The cost is \$40 and includes meals. Further information and registration is available at www.echamber.com, or by calling Christina at Coastal Community Capital at 508-362-3225, ext. 515.

Aviation Company Introduces Jet, Anticipates New Jobs

Rectrix Aviation introduced its new Challenger 300 jet aircraft at Barnstable Municipal Airport last week, a move that is helping create dozens of new jobs for the area, according to the company.

The 10-passenger jet, manufactured by Bombardier Inc. of Montréal, represents the beginning of Rectrix's expansion into flight operations, a move expected to create 60 to 70 jobs in Barnstable once the company's purchase of New World Jet Corp. is completed.

"This is a very exciting day for Rectrix, and a very promising moment for Cape Cod and the surrounding region," Rectrix President and CEO Richard Cawley said in a prepared statement. "We're proud of this great jet and we're happy to be able to bring high-paying jobs with good benefits into the region in these tough economic times."

Positions have already been created and filled, including pilot, co-pilot, director of maintenance, ground operations and support staff, according to the statement.

The Challenger 300 will fly to domestic and international destinations as part of the flight services offered by Rectrix. The jet has a 63-foot wingspan, a cruising speed of 530 miles per hour and a cruising altitude of 41,000 feet.

In January, Rectrix announced its intent to purchase New World Jet Corp., an air carrier/charter operator based on Long Island, New York. The acquisition is expected to create 80 to 100 jobs between the Rectrix facilities in Hyannis and Sarasota, Florida. Cawley estimates that the Hyannis location will eventually gain 60 to 70 jobs.



New Store Offers Tech Help With Macs

By LAURA M. RECKFORD

There is a new Mac store in town. Users of Apple computers will be happy to know they can buy products and get their technical questions answered at the new store in Hyannis.

The grand opening of the store was last week. It is located across from Sam Diego's on Route 132.

Stephen A. Ide of Mashpee, owner of the store, said he decided to open in Hyannis because they had outgrown their store in Harwich. "We needed roughly one and a half times as much space," Mr. Ide said. "There is a huge demand for training and technician repair and support."

It is that devotion to tech support that, Mr. Ide said, sets his business a part from other places where people can buy Apple products. "It's all about support. The prices are the same. No one is as focused and as concentrated on customer support as we are," he said.

Mr. Ide's two stores-his other is on Route 28 in East Falmouth--are the only authorized Apple service providers on the Cape.

The new space, Mr. Ide said, gives the company much larger labs for their technicians.

Mr. Ide said the new store is off to a good start and inventory is still coming in. "We're 90 percent there," he said.

As part of the company's grand opening last week, they gave away a laptop, and in conjunction with the radio station 104.7, they are giving away an iPod shuffle. To enter to win the iPod, register at capemac.com.

The address of the store is 973 Iyannough Road/Route 132, and the phone number is 508-815-4526.

Chamber Employees Lauded

Four Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce employees were recognized for their years of service at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives held at the Sheraton Needham February 27.

Wendy K. Northcross, chief executive officer of the Cape Cod chamber, was recognized for 20 years of service; Stephen Richards, regional sales director, was recognized for 15 years of service; and Mary Ellen Liddell, visitor information specialist, and Kristen Mitchell, vice president of tourism marketing, were each recognized for five years of service.

Hess Buys Christy's

Hess Corporation will hold grand openings in the spring at each of its new stores to welcome customers.

Christy's of Cape Cod sold 11 of its 13 existing sites on Cape Cod to Hess Corporation on January 30.

Christy P. Mihos, owner of Christy's of Cape Cod, sold the gas stations and convenient stores last month and the stores are branded with the Hess logo.

Of the 11 stores to change from Christy's to Hess, four are located in the town of Barnstable. Hess stores and gas stations can be found on Main Street in Osterville, Iyannough Road in Hyannis, Ocean Street in Hyannis, and Falmouth Road in Hyannis.

Curves Holds Food Drive

Curves of Cape Cod is participating in the 11th annual Curves Food Drive to benefit local food banks during the month of March. Collectively, during the past five years, nearly 50 million pounds of food were distributed to local communities all over the world through the Curves Food Drive.

Curves of Cape Cod will waive its service fee for any new member who brings in a bag of nonperishable groceries and joins between now and March 28.

Others wishing to donate may drop off nonperishable food items at Curves Monday through Friday during business hours through the month of March. For more information, call Ms. Brandt at 508-477-4090 or visit www.capecodcurves.com.

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