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Susan Brychell and Leslie Plesac,
Directors of Purdue North Central – Porter County

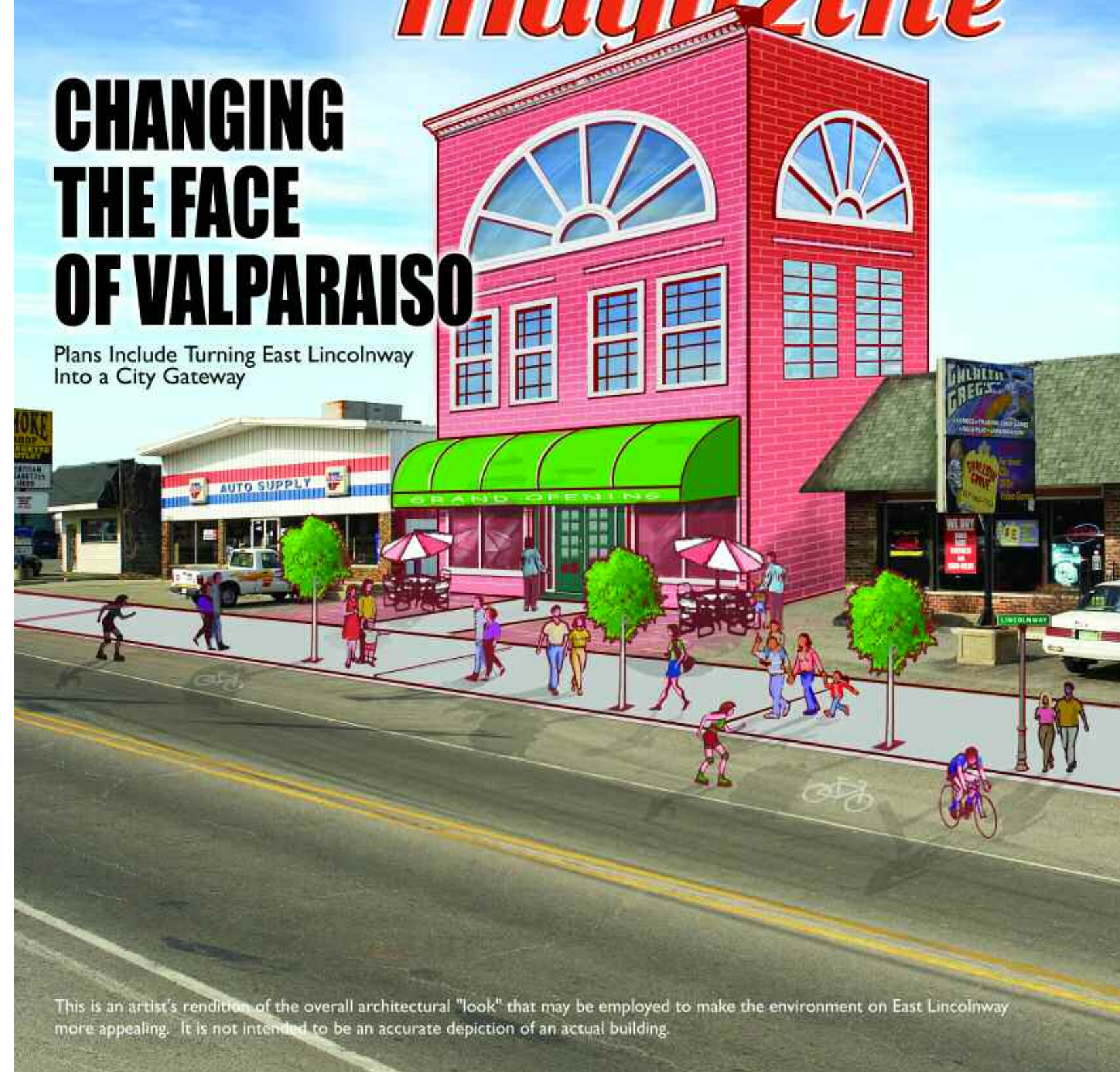
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Valparaiso magazine

CHANGING THE FACE OF VALPARAISO

Plans Include Turning East Lincolnway
Into a City Gateway



This is an artist's rendition of the overall architectural "look" that may be employed to make the environment on East Lincolnway more appealing. It is not intended to be an accurate depiction of an actual building.

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The cardiovascular team of NICP, pictured left to right:
Dr. Wheat, Dr. Forchetti, Dr. Kholoki, Dr. Rao, Dr. Atassi and Dr. Marchand. Sitting: Dr. Jara, Dr. Harris, Dr. Linert and Dr. Sehgal.



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Valparaiso magazine

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It took only three years to sell all 1200 lots in town—an average of \$100/lot, \$200 for prime residential lots, and \$400 for business lots.

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SPRING 2006

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Changing The Face Of Valparaiso

Going from this

Part of the City's redevelopment plans include creating a new gateway to Valparaiso University from East Lincolnway to LaPorte Avenue.

A parcel of land has been purchased to create University Avenue, and if city planners get their wish, private investors will want to build restaurants, retail shops and even student housing on this new vibrant corridor.

by Mike Griffin

Redevelopment: the Devil's in the Details!

(This article is the second in a series in which Valparaiso Magazine will examine the role redevelopment plays in the growth of a community.)

When redevelopment plans as envisioned by city planners come to fruition in Valparaiso, this community will experience changes of a magnitude perhaps not experienced since the founding of the City. Combining concepts that include a touch of European engineering to help traffic flow, impressive "gateways" which architecturally draw people into the community, greenbelts and pedestrian-friendly lanes and walkways to replace great expanses of asphalt, retail promenades that link Valparaiso University to a soon-to-be thriving retail area, and a revitalization of downtown which gives more people more reasons to visit and shop – to name only a few – the City is busy recreating itself for the 21st Century. This ambitious

and dynamic plan promises to keep the best of what is here today while improving other key areas.

Like many communities created in the mid 19th Century, the City of Valparaiso sprang into existence as much from a matter of luck or timing as from planning. Settlers forging westward set down their belongings, built homes, plowed the fields and perhaps opened trading posts for other travelers. Maybe a set of rails appeared from the east under the clanging hammers of laborers, bringing more people on the trains that stopped for water. Some of these workers and itinerant adventurers went no further, and soon enough so many people stopped in the same place that it became necessary to bring some order to the process and engineer a town. Governance was created. Plats were designed and streets laid out, usually around the structures that were already there. Infrastructure was put into place: streets and sidewalks and eventually

sewers and water lines and electricity. Laws were instituted. Schools were built, churches sprang up, and suddenly – or so it seemed – a real "place" was created.

And like every community, Valparaiso has evolved through the century and a half of societal and technological changes that have literally altered the way people live, work, move and communicate. What has made Valpo unique is that, unlike communities which may have been shaped by activities such as unfettered suburban sprawl, for most of the 20th Century, this City has been engaged in a continual, dynamic planning process.

"We have always had our eye on the ball, and I think this is what has allowed us to maintain the core of what Valparaiso is," explains Deb Butterfield, former President of the Valpo Chamber and the Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation. "It seemed that almost as soon as the (49) bypass was built we had an overlay plan to specify land use. Every five years or so we have taken

a new look at downtown. And once the east side was developed, we started a comprehensive redevelopment plan that included the entire community. So, planning is nothing new to us."

This process continues today as a coalition of public and private sector participants including city government, the Valparaiso

"Anything we discuss has to have a 30-year lifespan; anything short of that is irresponsible." -Stu Summers, Redevelopment Commission

Redevelopment Commission, the Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation, Valparaiso University, property owners, private citizens, volunteers and, of course, the Greater Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce actively participate in a new redevelopment concept which may have as much of an impact on the future of the city as the work done by the first architects who sketched the town center more than a hundred years ago.

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to This



Imagining what this City might look like 20, 50 or even 100 years from now might seem impossible, but city planners today all agree that there must be a unified vision to preserve and protect the best of Valpo while shaping it for the future.

"It is so important that we have a process in place so that we don't make the same mistakes that might have been made in the past and so that we capitalize on what are the overall strengths of our community," explains Mayor Jon Costas.

"Anything we discuss has to have a 30-year lifespan; anything short of that is irresponsible," says Stu Summers, Executive Director of the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission. "This means building in flexibility. For example, in the downtown some of the improvements we are putting in include underground conduit for cables. Someday traffic lights may be information centers with routing directions or traffic reports and it will be easy to upgrade if infrastructure is already in place. We have the ability to adapt to new technologies if we plan for them now."

Summers also adds well-planned economic development includes public projects that

stimulate private investment. "Cities can't do it all by themselves. We can jump start the process and then look for private investors to take advantage of what we've done."

A central focus of the plan is better integration of developed outlying areas into the identity of the City, including North Calumet Avenue and East Lincolnway, as well as continued improvement of the downtown area. In all cases, planning involves creating aesthetically pleasing, pedestrian-friendly enclaves that encourage human participation beyond the busy hustle of run-in, run-out shopping. By integrating cafés and coffee shops, movie theaters and green spaces, and retail opportunities from national brands to specialty stores, planners believe they have a sustainable concept.

But changes like this, of course, have an impact on business owners before, during and after the projects are completed. This means some stores will no longer be operating in their same location (see related story on pg 8). Sometimes this attrition occurs because of reconfiguration of streets and landscape. For example, on the east side of town, the well-known "triangle building," has been

moved, and several others have been demolished to make room for new streets and the roundabout. Sometimes businesses depart because certain stores simply don't fit well into the concept planners are trying to achieve. For example, on the north side of town, Big Lots and Family Dollar will likely be casualties in the evolution, according to Summers.

Traffic management is also a critical component. Both North Calumet and East Lincolnway have experienced major increases in the amount of vehicles that enter and exit the City each day; so redeveloping an area means much more than simple beautification and new buildings.

North Calumet Project

The area near Vale Park Road and Calumet sprang into existence some three decades ago when County Seat Plaza was built. At the time, this type of "strip mall" with a large anchor store and several smaller retail shops was the "shopping center of the future," appealing to the increasingly mobile customer by offering acres of free parking and soup-to-nuts options. It encouraged other retailers to open stores nearby, and created a destination, as well as traffic congestion and unsightly landscapes of signs, utility poles, and traffic lights. And according to city planners in Valpo, today, this concept just won't work in the overall plan.

"Frankly, County Seat (recently renamed Calumet Landing) has become obsolete," Summers explains. "(The area's) purpose has shifted from a regional shopping destination to more of a neighborhood retail center, and the old model just doesn't work."

"Retail business models change every five to seven years," explains Charlie McGill, Valparaiso Economic Development Director.

"We are creating a place that is part of the community, not just a shopping center." -Rick Urschel, Urschel Labs

"The way stores are built is constantly being revised. We need a format that doesn't impede stores from doing what they want."

To facilitate the necessary changes, the Redevelopment Commission has purchased the County Seat properties and is negotiating a sale with Vale Park Development, LLC which is an affiliate of Urschel Development. The potential new owners have also pledged to invest at least \$6.5 million in private funds for the redevelopment. At the time of publication of this issue, negotiations were still taking place between the remaining tenants in the complex and the City. The City had hoped to close on the sale sooner, but appraisers assigned to the court to determine the value of the tenants' lease rights have asked for more time. Judge William Alexa of the Porter County Superior Court gave appraisers until May 2.

Rick Urschel, Vice President of Operations for Urschel Laboratories, is involved in the group which is buying the old mall. He points out that the north side of Valpo is where the greatest residential growth is taking place, and the five-points intersection is the most traveled in the city. His group has worked closely with city planners to ensure that the potential of the

area is realized. "The new plans will help this community by leaps and bounds," he says. "We are creating a place that is part of the community, not just a shopping center. It's somewhere people will bring the family, spend a few hours, shop, go to a movie, go to dinner and feel safe and at home."

His company is also investing in the north corridor by redoing the frontage road from Vale Park Road to Wall Street with sidewalks and landscaping.

Instituting such changes means, at best, inconveniencing and, at worst, displacing, businesses already thriving in the area (see related story on page 8). Some buildings will be coming down, and in some cases owners will have to move so that the old building can be demolished and move again to the new structure.

As for the pesky five-point intersection, discussions are being conducted with federal,

local and state governments for matching funds to generally improve all of North Calumet from Vale Park Road to Bullseye Lake Road. In addition an extension is underway for Vale Park Road west towards Valparaiso High School, with plans for completion in the fall. "This is an environmentally friendly and sensitive roadway and pathway that we believe will greatly enhance the area," Summers says.

East Lincolnway

Like North Calumet, East Lincolnway is an area that evolved under less rigid guidelines, and with the creation of the State Road 49 bypass it has become a major gateway into the city. Thus, it is also slated to undergo a transformation. But this area has a very unique distinction, its proximity to Valparaiso University. As a result, it has its own unique needs.

"Here you really want to take advantage of the image and energy that the University provides," says Jim Jorgensen, local attorney who served as chairperson of an implementation committee for the city's Downtown Hyett Palma Study, and Chairman of the Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation. "It adds a whole new dimension to the thought process."

This dimension is reflected in the preliminary plans which include new sidewalks and landscaping to provide both beauty and accessibility. Obtrusive utility poles will be moved to the rear of the property to open the streetscape and make it more inviting. In addition, a parcel of property has been purchased by the City to create a link between East Lincolnway and LaPorte Street. Named University Avenue, the new street will serve as a dramatic gateway to Valparaiso University from the north and offer private investors opportunities to create

a vibrant retail boulevard with shops, restaurants, student-oriented retail stores, etc.

Reggie Syrcle, Executive Director of University Relations at Valparaiso University sees the new plans as a plus both for the City and VU. "We're excited about the city's plans for the area around campus. While the city's plans will make a much more attractive gateway to the city from the east, the new look also should help showcase the University and improve traffic flow in the campus area," he says. "Plans for East Lincolnway should spark creation of new retail outlets and provide an economic benefit to the city while providing nearby services for University students."

"We're excited about the city's plans for the area around campus..."

-Reggie Syrcle, Valparaiso University

The heavy stop and go traffic that clogs East Lincolnway virtually all day every day will indeed be mitigated by the inclusion of a roundabout (see Winter '06 Valparaiso Magazine), but some local merchants are concerned that keeping traffic moving has the potential of causing it to pass right by their businesses.

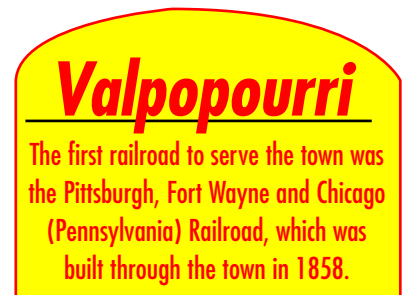
"I would like to see another stoplight put in place," says Joe Feller, President of Heinold and Feller. "I have a huge concern that we don't just turn East Lincolnway into a

thoroughfare with customers driving right past us."

Also, according to planners, a great opportunity exists both on East Lincolnway as well as on North Calumet to create "gateways" into Valparaiso. As the two primary arteries into the community, these are the first chances the City has to make an impression. So, don't be surprised to see landmark signage and landscaping that clearly define the borders of the city.

Urschel points out that, as the key roadways leading into town, the two areas, "... should esthetically draw people into the community with a sense of 'I've arrived'."

And if the big ideas of our city planners come to fruition, Valparaiso will be poised to continue to "arrive" well into this century. ✓



REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN 2006:

A New and Better City is in the Works

City planners expect this year to be one of continued renovation for Valparaiso, with several impressive projects planned for 2006. Of course, weather and other delays may alter this schedule somewhat, but it won't be long before many positive changes will be in place.

Vale Park Way Link

Work will begin to extend Vale Park Road westward from Valparaiso Street (near the Post Office) to Campbell Street. This includes installing signals at both new intersections and a

comprehensive environmental plan to mitigate wetlands.

Calumet StreetScape

This project includes installation of decorative lighting, sidewalks and underground drainage from Vale Park Road to Wall Street.

County Seat Plaza

It is hoped that the sale of County Seat Plaza (now called Calumet Landing) to Vale Park Development LLC will be completed sometime late this spring. At that time improvements will begin to the old mall and surrounding areas.

Downtown Streetscape

The focus will be on improvements to downtown as requested by the Downtown Improvement Board including: Renovation of four blocks at 100% Redevelopment Commission expense and Matching Grant Funds (applied for) for renovating four other blocks in 2007.

The Triangle

The key project here is the construction of the roundabout:

- Reconfigure and reconstruct all legs of the intersections
- Add curb and gutter
- Create Indiana's FIRST roundabout on a State

Highway (The Indiana Department of Transportation is a key partner in financing this project.)

East Lincolnway

A revitalization of the corridor on East Lincolnway from Roosevelt to the Triangle to US 30 will begin in 2006.

- Overhead utility lines will be removed
- Property for the new University Avenue linking Lincolnway south to LaPorte Street will be acquired.
- Incentives will be provided to adjacent property owners who choose to improve the facades of their buildings.

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When Redevelopment Gets Personal

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The first courthouse was built in 1837.

Balancing the Common Good with the Company Business

Creating redevelopment plans with a lifespan of several decades is not easy; nor is determining the best way to finance these projects. But as difficult as these things may be, there is another piece to the puzzle that may be the single hardest thing to do: balance individual business owner needs with what is considered best for the entire community in the long run.

Imagine you're a business owner who invested perhaps a life savings in your dream store, not to mention sweat equity and the pressure of owning your own business. One day a person walks in and essentially tells you that what you've been doing for umpteen years is going to have to change. Maybe you're going to have to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars to change the façade of your store. Perhaps you're going to have to give up frontage and find somewhere else for your customers to park – if there is anywhere else on your property. Or worse, maybe you're going to have to move.

This is exactly what is happening today to business owners in the key redevelopment areas in Valparaiso, and while virtually all of those interviewed for this story agree that the broad plans outlined by the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission are the right thing to do for the overall good of the community, they are not sure what the personal impact will be on their businesses. And that is what has them most worried. So, they have banded together to work with the city and to protect their own interests.

Joe Feller, the President of Heinold and Feller has two buildings that will be impacted by the Eastgate Project. His auto repair, tire and lawn and garden enterprises have been in that location since 1958. He understands the

long term benefits of changing the corridor, and supports the general idea. But he does have some concerns.

"There is no question in my mind that something has to be done out here, and that in the long run we'll say it's really nice," he explains. "But the plans have changed so much and so many times, that we're still not clear on



Greg Engstrom

"I know something has to be done and I support it, but these changes will be difficult for many of us. We're just not sure how."

what is really going to happen."

"The corridor is not the prettiest thing," says Greg Engstrom, owner of AmeriPawn on East Lincolnway. "I know something has to be done and I support it, but these changes will be difficult for many of us. We're just not sure how."

Also living in this redevelopment limbo is Kevin Crozier, owner of the Dairy Queen in what is now Calumet Landing. "It's been pretty uneasy for me for the past three or four years," he says. "I'm not sure where I fit into the plans. First we were told the out buildings would stay; now we're hearing something different." But Crozier was also emphatic that he supports the broad concept of changing the face of North Calumet. "I am optimistic that in the next two to five years we'll say this is the best thing that ever happened, but right now there are a lot of unanswered questions."

According to Stu Summers, Executive Director of the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission, the options for business owners include moving permanently to another location, or occupying temporary space elsewhere while new construction is being done. "This means some tenants may have to move twice, but we hope they understand that in the long run it will be much better for their businesses," he says. He also is quick to point out that the city pays for these moves.

All of the business persons agreed that the city has done a very good job of communicating with them and including them in the process. "You have to take into consideration the human factor when you want to make change," explains Stu Summers. "That's why we bring the stakeholders to the table to meet, confer and discuss the issues. We strive for a win-win scenario, but inevitably some people still see themselves as losing. We'll always try to

mitigate that loss with payments and relocation options."

"It's tough for business owners and government policy makers to see eye-to-eye. We simply have different perspectives," Engstrom says. "But we've been involved in the process since the beginning and we have stuck with it. Overall, I think it has been very positive."

The impact of the changes is different for merchants, depending on where they are located. On the east side, plans to include sidewalks and landscaping call for owners to give up ten feet of frontage on each side of the road. For some this is a small sacrifice, but for others it could mean the end of their business in that location.

Feller's businesses are on a corner and have ample frontage, and he feels very fortunate compared to some other owners. "For me to give up ten feet of frontage isn't a problem, but for stores further west, it means giving up parking. And if your customers don't have any place to park, then you're not going to have customers."

John Morgavan, owner of Valparaiso Transmission, is more blunt. "This proposal is

going to put some people out of business," he says. In addition to the parking problem, he points out that the other concern of the owners is removal of the utility poles that now line the street. "We want the utilities buried, and the City says it will cost \$4 million. We have a study that says it can be done for \$1 million. So, it's like a big chess game. They make a move; then we make a move."

Current plans call for moving utility poles behind the stores. "Whether or not this is the best solution to the problem is up for argument," Engstrom says.

Included in the "chess game" is the creation of incentives to get merchants to go along with the program. These span the spectrum from matching grants for façade upgrades to buyouts and relocation expenses for stores forced to move. Engstrom sees the current proposals for Eastgate to be very favorable. "The City's incentive package is second-to-none. It is fair and generous."

Again, Morgavan disagrees. "I don't see any positive changes. There are no incentives for us that will make it worth it," he explains. "Don't

get me wrong; I agree something needs to be done but not something that will negatively impact us."

In the end, Crozier would just like to see things move forward faster. Living in suspended animation for several years has prevented him from making changes he needs and wants to make. "I have wanted to remodel for the last three to four years, but I'm not going to spend that money until I know what's going to happen." In the meantime, his business is going very well and he loves the location. "It's a great location and I love doing business here," he explains. "I don't know what form (the changes) will take, but I'm sure they will be a big improvement." ✓

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Around Town

American Medical Oxygen Sales Corp. proudly announces its **award of accreditation status** by the Accreditation Commission for Health Care, Inc. (ACHC) for Respiratory and Home Medical Equipment Services. By attaining accreditation, American Medical Oxygen Sales Corp. has demonstrated its commitment to maintain a higher level of competency and strive for excellence in its products, services and customer satisfaction. AMOS has (4) locations in Indiana: Hammond, Valparaiso, South Bend and inside the Indian Ridge @ Wal-Mart in Mishawaka.

The **Brassie Golf Club** is planning an "Open House" style weekend of golf for the purpose of raising funds for local charities, creating publicity for area businesses, and promoting the great game of golf. This "Bring Your Heart, Bring Your Game" weekend is a second year event scheduled for May 6 & 7, 2006. Two special charity groups will be selected for both days and each group will receive a portion of the \$30 golf fee. There is

no fee for groups who want to be involved, call (219) 921-1192.

Michael E. Schrage, President and CEO of **Centier Bank**, announced the **promotion of Timothy W. Warner** to Vice President and Group Manager of Business Banking. Warner's office is located at Centier's Valparaiso Downtown Office, 150 Lincolnway

The **City of Valparaiso's Fourth of July BLAST** will be held on July 4, 2006 at **Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Valparaiso**. Festivities begin at 7 p.m.

Claudon and Anderson welcomes Matt Harvey, an independent investment professional, as an associate of **Claudon and Anderson Insurance, L.L.C.**

The **DiToro/Lahey Team of RE/MAX Affiliates** is sponsoring a **Grand Opening Celebration** on Saturday May 20th, at the Grande Prairie Development, 150 S. State Road 49, Valparaiso, featuring tether rides on the RE/MAX Hot Air Balloon for a donation to

Riley's Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. Other family activities and picnic food are planned with all proceeds going to Riley's. All available homes will be open to tour. The DiToro/Lahey Team is donating a portion of each home sale to Riley's through The Children's Miracle

Network. Come have some fun and visit this "Miracle" Development. For additional information visit www.GrandePrairieValpo.com.

Direct Cellular Sprint/Nextel Corporate offices located at 2310 La Porte Ave. Ste 300, Valparaiso, recently opened **two new stores**. One store is located in Schererville at The Shoppes at Schererville, 713 US Hwy. 41 Suite E, the other store is located in Orland Park, IL. at the Home Depot Center, 15810 So. Harlem Ave. The new locations will assist Sprint/Nextel customers with sales and customer service in most of Northwest Indiana and the South/Southwest Suburbs of IL. Additional locations are scheduled to open in 2007.

Valparaiso architecture and interior design firm, **Design Organization, Inc.**, named Senior Architects **Thomas C. Longhi, AIA** and **Darin Couturiaux, AIA** as Associates on **January 3, 2006**. They join DO Principals Spero Valavanis, AIA NCARB; Victor Ritter, AIA; Jeff Wolf, AIA; and Associate Principals Andrew Moats, AIA; Peter Andreou, AIA; and John Hamann.

Gymboree Play & Music, Valparaiso is pleased to announce the start of **Baby Signs® Parent Workshops and Sign, Say & Play™** classes for babies 6-18 months. Call 548-8404 for details.

Valparaiso attorney **David L. Hollenbeck** has been recognized by fellow members of the bar as one of the **Best Lawyers in America** and a **2006 Indiana Super Lawyer**. The only Valparaiso practicing attorney to receive the dual distinction, Hollenbeck, who practices in

the areas of Workers Compensation and local government law, is a partner in **Blachly, Tabor, Bozik & Hartman – Lawyers on the Square**. Hollenbeck has received the Best Lawyer distinction for 11 consecutive years.

Housing Opportunities, Inc., which serves the community through the development and provision of safe, decent, and affordable housing and customized support services, will be offering **Homebuyer Education classes** at a variety of locations throughout Porter, Lake, and LaPorte Counties. These sessions are designed to teach new or prospective homebuyers about topics of interest, including budgeting basics, searching for a new home, and exploring finance options. They will also offer Financial Literacy courses to provide a better understanding of banking and credit fundamentals. For more information, please call (219) 462-3726.

Ivy Tech Foundation will host a **Victorian Tea event** on Sunday, April 30, 2006 at **Aberdeen Manor, 216 Ballantrae, Valparaiso**.

The event begins at 2:30 p.m., includes a silent auction, luncheon and performance "Out of the Attic and Into My Heart" by Jill Brummett. Tickets are \$30 (\$15 tax deductible) each and may be purchased by calling 464-8514, by April 19th. Proceeds raised will go to support **Ivy Tech's Capital Campaign**.

Job Hunting? It only makes sense to use the best tools available. You'll find them at your local **KV Works/WorkOne office**. Each KV Works office has an **Individual Resource Area (IRA)** equipped with computer work stations, newspapers, job listings, and a host of job-related resources. The computers may be accessed, free-of charge, for writing resumes, cover letters, and

submitting applications via the internet. **KV Works** serves a 10 county area in northwest Indiana. Porter County offices are at 502 Wall Street, Valparaiso, and at the AmeriPlex in Portage. Phone 219-464-4861 for more information, or visit our web site at www.kvworks.org.

Continued on page 20



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Q How can my business get the most out of our marketing budget?

A Back to Basics: The value of a Marketing Plan

Here is a common scenario: Your business receives an interesting, colorful postcard in the mail advertising a local business. The card catches your eye, and you think, "Hey, we should send something like this!" Your mind starts racing with ideas for catchy tag lines and eye-popping graphics that would really wow your customers.

But before you delve into your Chamber Membership Directory under the heading "Advertising and Marketing Services" or start designing it yourself with clip art as your stock library, consider taking a step back. Marketing is only effective if it reaches its intended target

and is relevant to that person's needs or interests. Developing a thorough marketing plan is an important first step in defining your business' role in the market and discerning what your audience needs and wants.

1. Make Plato proud. My mantra when developing a marketing plan with a client is "Know thyself." Start by listing the products or services you provide and the needs they fulfill. Go on to list your business' specific strengths and weaknesses. Along with listing all the advantages of doing business with your company, you should also list any shortfalls. For example, your prices might be lower, but maybe your competitor offers online ordering. Addressing weaknesses can highlight opportunities for growth.

Next, define your objectives for the short and long-term. Prioritizing your objectives will in turn prioritize your marketing initiatives. For example, if your number one goal is a broader customer base, you might

focus your marketing on networking opportunities such as trade show attendance or community involvement.

2. Know your competition. You can only set yourself apart if you know the difference between your business and its competition. Ask the question: "Why would someone choose my business over the competition?" And then capitalize on the answer. If your company is new and is generating a lot of media buzz, consider sending a letter of introduction along with any articles written on your company to your prospects. Or, if your competitive advantage is a long list of satisfied customers you might consider creating a mailer featuring one of your star customers explaining in their own words why they chose to do business with you.

Continued on page 16

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3. Know your audience. Remember that your audience isn't limited to your sales prospects. Vendors, past customers, key referral sources, even the general public might be target groups. A marketing plan should explain how you plan to reach each group. Also think about what factors weigh into your customers' buying decision. Some consumer groups may pay higher prices to buy locally, so stressing your businesses' ties to the community would be a good move.

Defining your target geographies will help determine which marketing mediums are appropriate. A billboard will mainly be seen by people living or working locally. If you are trying to reach customers within a specific zip code you may want to invest in a targeted mailing list. Banner advertising, e-mail marketing campaigns or Search Engine Optimization of your own site are ways of reaching anyone, anytime. Keep in mind that the internet can also be used to reach people locally based on the sites you advertise on. Websites of local newspapers and community organizations are probably only visited by people in that area, so you're targeting that market by association.

The time and money spent on a sound marketing plan leverages a more effective

campaign in the long run. Any marketing initiatives you implement on the foundation of solid forethought are strengthened by the time spent defining your business, your market and your audience; which equals money well spent.

About the Author

Anna Parker is Director of Marketing Services for DeSCo, a Valparaiso firm specializing in Marketing, Business Solutions and Energy Services. She can be reached at 219.548.9999 or by e-mail at aparker@descosolutions.com.

I attend plenty of networking events, but sometimes feel like I am socializing more rather than networking effectively. What advice can you give me to ensure I am gaining good prospects for business?

Three Key Tips to Successful Networking

Be Prepared - Networking is a little like planning a political campaign. While it's essential that you are honest and relaxed, you

should not wing it. Just as politicians think about what they tactically need to accomplish, convey, and gain when they make an appearance or give a speech, you should approach networking opportunities with a game plan. Before you confidently and charmingly sashay into a business conference room, a dinner party, or group event, do your homework. Find out who will be there, or do your best to list who you think will probably be present. Then decide who you would most like to meet. When you have your list of potential contacts, thoroughly research their work and their backgrounds and then make up some questions and conversational statements that reflect your research. And finally, think critically about what your goals are for your networking function. What information do you want to walk away with? What do you want to convey to the people you meet? But, as is always true, it's important to be flexible and to perceive opportunities you didn't plan to confront.

Networking Knows No Boundaries - Business conferences, informational interviews, college reunions, and cocktail parties are obvious networking opportunities -

Continued on page 18

Valpopourri
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you expect to walk away with a few business cards and some recommendations for potential rolodex entries. But the reality is that invaluable contacts and enviable opportunities often surprise us. Good networkers are flexible people who approach connection-making as a fluid enterprise that extends far beyond hotel conference room walls. You never know who will step onto the adjacent elliptical trainer at the gym; who will be parked behind you in an interminable grocery store line; who will sit next to you on an airplane; or who will be under the hair dryer next to you at the beauty salon. Don't let these opportunities pass you by. While it may have been sheer luck that you bumped into an affable CEO, your savvy approach to networking can turn a normal exchange into a pivotal moment in your business path. Always be ready to make a contact and exchange business cards. And remember, don't hesitate to network someone who has no obvious connection to your ambitions: Your new contact may be able to give you relevant names of his or her friends and colleagues.

Follow Up - After you meet with a contact, it is absolutely essential to write a thank you note. Tell your contact how much he or she

helped you, and refer to particularly helpful, specific advice. Everyone - even the most high-level executive - likes to feel appreciated. In addition to immediate follow-up after a meeting or conversation, keep in touch with your contacts. This way, they may think of you if an opportunity comes up, and they will also be forthcoming with new advice. It's important to stay on their radar screens without being imposing or invasive. And, of course, if you get that new business, be sure to tell them and thank them again for their help.

About the author

Jeff Jackson is the owner of JacksonVision, a full-service marketing agency in Valparaiso. For more than 20 years Jeff has practiced global sales and marketing management. Jeff received a degree in Business Administration from Purdue University and a Bachelor's degree in advertising design from Columbia College in Chicago, Illinois.

Valpopourri

The first settlers in the area arrived in 1834. They were Adam & Polly Campbell, and Thomas & Margaret Campbell (hence Campbell Street).

Jeff can be reached at 219-548-2080 or jeff@jackson-vision.com ✓

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Manpower announced that it has launched a new brand to align with the range of services the company offers today. As part of the re-brand, Manpower rolled out a new logo, marketing materials and an advertising campaign across its global network of 72 countries. This is the first time that Manpower has undergone an extensive re-branding process since the company was founded in Milwaukee, Wis., in 1948. More information www.manpower.com

Brent Fielder, Manager of **Metropolitan Title Company's Valparaiso office** has recently been promoted. He will now be managing and

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overseeing business development in the LaPorte office, as well as the Valparaiso office.

Join **Opportunity Enterprises** on April 22nd for the **4th Annual Taltree Ten**. This exciting 10-mile combination road/trail run will prove to be both challenging and fun and will begin at 8:30 a.m. at the Aberdeen Manor. New this year is a 4-mile fun walk that will start at 8:40 a.m. Proceeds from this event will directly benefit the Opportunity Enterprises Endowment Fund. For more information, call 219-464-9621 x239.

In honor of National Older Americans Month, **Pines Village Retirement Communities** is proud to present, "The Power of Forgiving" by Emmy Award winner Eva Kor. Kor is an Auschwitz survivor and founder of C.A.N.D.L.E.S., Holocaust museum. She has been featured on "60 Minutes," "Oprah," "20/20," and "Good Morning America." The event will take place on

Friday, May 19, 8:00 a.m. – 10 a.m. at Strongbow Inn. The cost is \$25.00 per person, including breakfast. For more information, contact Lisa Huber at 219-465-1591.

WorkingWell, located in Crown Point, Griffith, Hammond, Michigan City, recently opened in Valparaiso at 2421 LaPorte Avenue. WorkingWell provides high quality medical care to businesses and industry with a primary goal to work closely with employers to reduce OSHA recordables. The regional occupational health program, WorkingWell, provides businesses with a full-range of healthcare services designed to help companies control healthcare costs and make healthy employees.

TPAOne, a third party administrator for self-funded employer health benefit plans, located in Valparaiso, IN., has substantially increased its capabilities to help employers manage health care costs by focusing on the health of employees and their family members. The new program, called **Optimal Health**, utilizes two state-of-the-art technologies: Predictive Modeling and Health Coaching for members with chronic disease. For more information contact Gary Fischer, CLU, President, TPAOne, 57 Franklin Center, Suite 109, Valparaiso or 219-464-2069.

The Valparaiso Parks, Fit City, Pathways and Porter Hospital Presents **PED & PEDAL** a 'hike and bike' family-fun event for all ages! Saturday May 13, 2006, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., Rogers-Lakewood Park, Valparaiso. For more information visit www.valparaisoparks.org

A long-time faculty member, who is chair of the Department of Geography and Meteorology, has been named dean of the **College of Arts and Sciences at Valparaiso University effective July 1. Dr. Jon T. Kilpinen**, who joined the faculty in 1992 and has served as department chair since 2000, will replace Dr. Albert Trost, who is retiring

as dean after holding that position since 1996. Dr. Trost will return to the classroom as a professor of political science.

For the second consecutive year, an engineering student at **Valparaiso University** has been named to **USA Today's All-USA College Academic Team**, which recognizes the nation's most outstanding students. **David Wheeler**, a senior electrical engineering major from St. Charles, Ill., was named to the Third Team along with 19 other students. A panel of judges selected the winners from more than 600 students nominated by colleges and universities across the United States.

The **Wedding Shoppe Bridal Reception** will be held on April 13, from 6-9pm (doors open at 5:45, please arrive promptly) at the Avalon Manor, Merrillville. The evening will include personalized bride/vendor networking, hors d'oeuvres, fashion show, champagne toast, and prizes. Tickets are \$5 in advance/\$10 at the door and are available at The Wedding Shoppe Resource Center or on our website www.weddingshoppenniwi.com ✓

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Economic Development Partnerships Work for a Better Valpo

by Jim Jorgensen and Stu Summers*

*Stu Summers is the Executive Director of the Valparaiso Redevelopment Corporation and Jim Jorgensen is the Board Chair of the Valparaiso Economic Dev. Corp.

Economic development has a focused priority of retaining, creating and attracting quality jobs in Valparaiso. Two (2) entities, the Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation (VEDC) and the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission (VRC), work together to accomplish these tasks.

The VEDC is a non-profit corporation which secures the partnership between the public sector (the City) and the private sector (the Chamber). The governing Board of Directors is co-appointed by both partners.

Funding for the VEDC comes from two (2) sources. First, investors, primarily from the private sector, contribute to the VEDC on an annual basis. These investments are matched on a \$2:\$1 basis by the City through a portion of the City's EDIT revenues.

The VEDC conducts a wide range of economic development initiatives. Retention of existing businesses is a critical function. In today's fluid global economy, a quality job retained is as valuable as a quality job gained. Additionally, approximately 80% of new job creation will come from existing businesses.

The VRC plays a critical, yet different, function. The VRC is a creation of statute. The Commission's members are drawn from both elected officials and representatives of the private business sector.

The powers of the VRC are set by statute. Its primary function is to promote economic redevelopment by funding and completing the infrastructure (roads, sewer, water, etc.) which is needed to attract new businesses and to promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and commercial corridors.

The VRC has a different funding source

than the VEDC. The Redevelopment Commission is empowered to create Tax Increment Financing ("TIF") districts. In a TIF, a benchmark is set for real estate tax assessments in a defined geographic area. From that point forward, any increase in tax revenues resulting from an increase in assessed values goes to the VRC. The VRC uses those monies to fund the infrastructure improvements which are needed to improve and promote the TIF district. These improvements can either be paid on a "pay as you go" basis, or they can be financed through bonds. In Valparaiso, five different TIF districts have been united into one to allow for more efficient financial management.

The relationship/partnership between the VEDC and VRC would work this way. If the VEDC is able to attract a new business to Valparaiso, it might show the prospect a parcel of unimproved real estate. Naturally, the prospect would insist that the parcel be serviced by roads, sewer and water. A railroad spur might also be needed.

The VRC can make all of this possible through the formation of a TIF. It can initiate all of the needed improvements, either at once or in stages, and pay for them through the increased tax revenue generated by the increased assessment created by the project.

In Valparaiso, the VRC has made possible the Pratt Industries USA and Market Place

developments. (Pratt Industries USA is one of the City's largest private-sector employers.) The Redevelopment Commission has planned, and will fund, the East Lincolnway corridor (including the roundabout) and the County Seat infrastructure improvements. It will also fund the extension of Vale Park Road, improvements to Calumet Avenue, and the reconstruction of the downtown sidewalks along Lincolnway. The Commission works to leverage the TIF funds: Additional funding for these projects will come from private sector investments and State transportation grants.

Economic development – the retention, creation and attraction of quality jobs – requires a seamless web of partnerships. These partnerships exist at the regional and county levels. Partnerships also thrive at the local level and are best exemplified by the Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation and the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission when they work together to sustain economic development and vitality in Valparaiso. ✓



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