

# Beautification commission spotlights mortgage firm

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

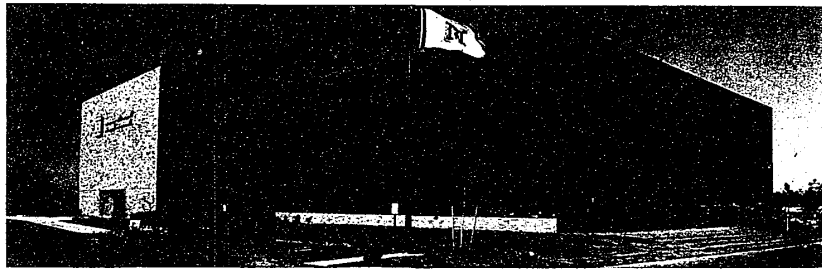
Manufacturers Hanover Mortgage Corp. (MHMC) has been singled out by Farmington Hills Beautification Commission in its program of publicly recognizing a public building or private business where special efforts have been made to make the property attractive.

The new three-story building is located at 27555 Farmington Road. It serves as corporate headquarters for

the nation's largest bank-affiliated mortgage servicing firm, and the second-largest company of its kind in the industry.

The structure, which sits on better than 6.5 acres of land, also has another honor coming its way, in addition to being lauded by the beautification commission for its attractiveness. The structure also will be featured in a trade publication.

"The Steel Case people were so impressed with the overall scheme of our



Manufacturers Hanover Mortgage Corp. opens its new headquarters this spring on the corner of Farmington and 12 Mile roads. The facility was designed, equipped and furnished to perform a complete and innovative range of mortgage-lending services with high efficiency. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

new home they are featuring MHMC in Office Graphics, which is distributed across the country," said Deborah Hoke, assistant vice president of the firm.

STEEL CASE supplied furniture and landscape panels for the building. Lees Carpet furnished carpet tiles and Owens Corning supplied the acoustical ceiling tiles.

The interior walls are heavy vinyl and wood veneer.

"The wide use of ambient indirect lighting as opposed to overhead fixtures not only creates an excellent environment, but facilitates the reconfiguration of work stations with a minimum of inconvenience and expense," Ms. Hoke said.

The overall effect is enhanced by many live plants and carefully selected wall hangings.

The exterior finish exhibits thermopane, tinted glass windows with heavy-

gauge aluminum backed with solid wood panels.

The landscaping has been completed with the plantings of both large and small trees, and many flowering trees and shrubs designed by James C. Scott & Associates of Bloomfield Hills.

"BECAUSE OURS is a people-intensive business, our new facilities are engineered for people," Ms. Hoke said. "It's been demonstrated that bal-

anced lighting, acoustical values and functional office landscapes have a great deal to do with attracting and holding the committed, growth-oriented people our business demands," she said.

MHMC employs 518 in the Farmington Hills headquarters. Another 145 persons are employed by the firm in 19 branch offices throughout the U.S. Another 30-to-40 branch locations are planned to open within the next five years.

# Novo Products thrives as a cottage industry

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

If Sally Gaines hadn't blown the whistle, her husband might still be working as an engineer for a large company rather than operating one of his own. And Novo Products might still be a dream.

When Mrs. Gaines could no longer find a path across the family-room floor of their Farmington Hills home through the clutter of her husband's weekend project, she issued the ultimatum: If this night light that went on in the dark and off in the light was a business, then it deserved space of its own.

That was in 1976. But Don Gaines' company really began two years before in a discussion over pizza and beer. The company had subsequently been incorporated, but it was still in its infancy. The ultimatum caused the firm to grow up fast.

Before the end of the year Novo Products will leave its present location at 25943 Seven Mile in Redford for larger quarters.

GAINES OPERATED Novo Products as a cottage industry when the staff consisted of himself, his family and friends, working all kinds of odd hours to manufacture the night light.

And he continued in the same vein since the first full-time worker was hired in the spring of 1977.

When the present company gets too big to be a family, he said, he will turn it over to someone else to run and start anew.

"It's a comfortable, easy atmosphere here," he said. "No feeling of pressure, even when there are deadlines. Everyone knows what's happening, where the orders are going, what is being planned next."

"If anyone has an idea, it is expressed at group meetings. As the company prospers, so will the employees. You might call it the American Dream in action."

NOVO PRODUCTS is prospering. A boot dryer of Gaines' invention has been added to the line. The company has contracted to merchandise a night set-back thermostat. And most recently, the company's newspaper advertising was augmented with local television spots.

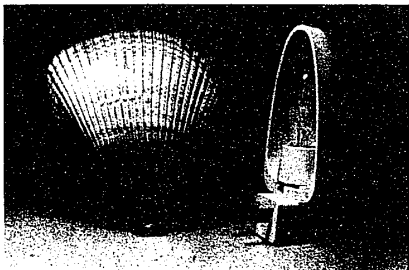
The company has outgrown its present location in Redford and will move to larger quarters, at 27499 Crestview Court in Farmington Hills, in mid-December.

But the larger place "is not too large. Just enough space to house a couple of other inventions I have in mind," he said.

Gaines described himself as having been a "lunker" ever since his days growing up in Dearborn. He took his engineering degree at Wayne State University after a stint in the army, then married the girl he fell in love with while still in high school.

He worked as an engineer with a large corporation until 1978, when he quit his job to devote himself full time to Novo Products.

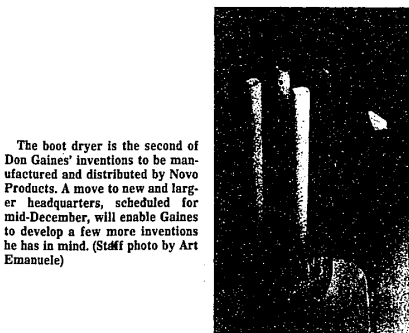
He and his wife have three children, Don, Sue and David, all of whom have worked at one time or another, in one form or another, for Novo Products.



The automatic night light that goes on in the dark and off in the light is the basis of Novo Products. (Staff photo by Art Emanuele)



When Novo Products signed the contract to merchandise a night set-back thermostat, Don Gaines quit his job with a large corporation to devote himself full time to the company. (Staff photo by Art Emanuele)



The boot dryer is the second of Don Gaines' inventions to be manufactured and distributed by Novo Products. A move to new and larger headquarters, scheduled for mid-December, will enable Gaines to develop a few more inventions he has in mind. (Staff photo by Art Emanuele)



Don Gaines has been shopping for a new location for Novo Products for the past few months to accommodate the company's growth. But he insists he will give it up if the company gets so large it loses its family concept. (Staff photo by Art Emanuele)

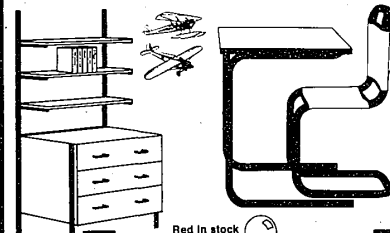
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