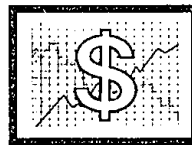


## Business

Marilyn Fitchett editor/591-2300

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# Convenience: food industry's mandate

By Carolyn Smith  
special writer

The state's growing food service industry will continue offering customers more conveniences and hassle-free experiences.

That's the prediction of John D. Correll, chairman of the board of the Birmingham-based Michigan Restaurant Association.

Correll, a Canton Township resident, also is vice president of development of RPM Pizza, Livonia, which owns 74 of the 80 Domino's Pizza stores in the metropolitan area.

He predicts the state's restaurant and food service business will post 1986 sales of about \$4.3 billion, a gain of 7 percent over last year. National sales are expected to increase by 6.5 percent over the same period.

More restaurants and stores are catering to the customer's need for convenience.

"Nobody wants less convenience. We all try to avoid even the smallest hassle," Correll said.

Owner of an independent pizza establishment in Westland two years ago, he recalled ordering pizza that was

delivered by Domino's rather than driving 20 minutes to pick up a free pizza from his own store.

Offering another example of resistance to hassles, Correll switches the scenario to the fast-food restaurant. The customer returns a hamburger because it has the wrong condiments. And then he or she waits.

"It's two or three minutes of waiting, so it's not a big deal. But the customer feels anxious, ignored, forgotten, as though the restaurant worker doesn't care."

MARKET SURVEYS attribute sales increases to growing numbers of two-income families and aging people.

"The working woman doesn't have time or energy to cook a family meal, so it's a question of getting the easy meal on the table," Correll said. The aging population has the time and the money to eat out.

The need for fast, dependable service and quality food at an affordable price has generated many changes in the industry.

Owing to an awareness Correll believes was started by McDonald's, other restaurants are cashing in on the breakfast trade. Major chains, table-service and cafe-

ria-style restaurants are opening their doors earlier to welcome customers.

"Some of these people have suddenly realized Mom was right when she said it was healthy to have a good breakfast."

There's also an increase in the number of table-service restaurants offering packaged takeouts. Hogan's and Richard & Reiss restaurants in Birmingham and the Golden Mushroom in Southfield package items from their upscale menus. Detroit's London Chop House delivers carryouts in a limousine. Many family restaurants also offer takeout service.

Supermarkets have responded to demands for convenience. In addition to ready-to-cook items such as stuffed chickens and shish kebabs, store delicatessens sell soup, salads, desserts and hot side dishes and entrees by the pound.

Also biting into the market are convenience stores and gas stations. Some 7-Eleven stores, for example, sell a variety of sandwiches. And some of the larger Speedway gas stations offer everything from breakfast sandwiches to catfish dinners. There are 142 items on the Speedway menu.

RESTAURANT MANAGERS have become more sensitive to the presence of fat, cholesterol, salt and spices in certain food items. "Most restaurants haven't changed their basic menu, but they have responded to dietary needs," Correll said.

Although the food service industry is expanding, the number of its workers is dwindling.

"The shortage of labor definitely is a major problem. It affects good service and causes lost revenue. In some ways, competition for food dollars is like a football game. It's not who plays the game better, it's who can put the whole team on the field," Correll said.

Customers will keep on buying what Correll calls "the experience," which can embrace a variety of pleasures.

"It can be the flavor, the aroma, the atmosphere, the peace of mind of dining in a sanitary place. Maybe it's picking off the middle part of the pizza or that one good burp an hour after eating a hamburger with onions."

"Whatever it is, a lot of people buy it. And it's our business to keep improving it."

## Area bullish on building

Residential building permit issuance climbed to a seven-year high in southeast Michigan for the first six months of 1986, according to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

In Wayne, Oakland and Washtenaw counties, 1986 six-month totals are down from 1985 levels. Residential building is down 12.1 percent in Wayne, 9 percent in Oakland and 8.6 percent in Washtenaw. But Oakland still led the region's seven counties in total permits issued for the first six months of this year.

For the seven-county area, 11,202 permits were issued, a 12.6 percent increase from the same period in 1985. The increase is the highest since 11,428 permits were issued for the same period in 1979.

Four of the seven counties show increases. Livingston led with a 62.2 percent increase over 1985, followed by Macomb with 61.8, Monroe with 46.4 and St. Clair with 37.9.

Sterling Heights led the region with 708 total residential building permits issued in the first six months of 1986. Sterling Heights recorded a

total of 380 single family permits and a total of 328 multiple family permits. Rochester Hills led the region in single family permits with 468. Southfield had the highest number of multiple family permits issued with 506.

The top 10 communities of Sterling Heights, Rochester Hills, Clinton Township, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Shelby Township, West Bloomfield Township, Warren, Northville Township and Livonia accounted for 5,043 permits, 45 percent of the total permits issued in the region.

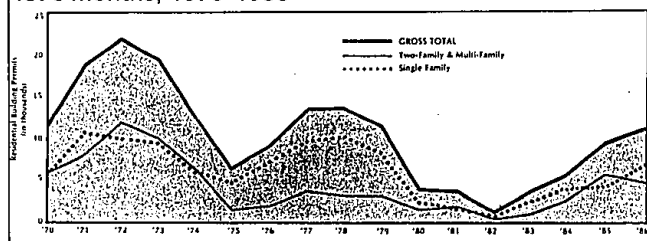
## Residential permit leaders

| 1986                   | 1985                   | 1984                 |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Sterling Heights 708   | Farmington Hills 947   | Avon Twp. 538        |
| Rochester Hills 676    | Novi 865               | Sterling Heights 455 |
| Clinton Twp. 591       | Southfield 534         | Wixom 443            |
| Farmington Hills 555   | Rochester Hills 524    | Farmington Hills 350 |
| Southfield 504         | Sterling Heights 473   | Waterford Twp. 321   |
| Shelby Twp. 457        | Ann Arbor 440          | Novi 246             |
| W. Bloomfield Twp. 450 | W. Bloomfield Twp. 420 | Clinton Twp. 243     |
| Warren 383             | Chesterfield Twp. 373  | Troy 230             |
| Northville Twp. 374    | Canton Twp. 352        | Livonia 203          |
| Livonia 345            | Westland 336           | Melvindale 200       |
| <b>Total 5,043</b>     | <b>Total 5,264</b>     | <b>Total 3,229</b>   |

## Multiple-unit permit leaders

| 1986                  | 1985                   | 1984                 |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Southfield 500        | Novi 748               | Wixom 427            |
| Clinton Twp. 366      | Farmington Hills 608   | Waterford Twp. 265   |
| Warren 341            | Southfield 529         | Sterling Heights 245 |
| Sterling Heights 328  | Ann Arbor 379          | Melvindale 200       |
| Northville Twp. 280   | Westland 336           | Avon Twp. 145        |
| Shelby Twp. 243       | W. Bloomfield Twp. 285 | Fraser 122           |
| Chesterfield Twp. 223 | Chesterfield Twp. 270  | Harrison 117         |
| Farmington Hills 223  | Van Buren Twp. 251     | Novi 96              |
| Rochester Hills 208   | Northville Twp. 227    | Clinton Twp. 95      |
| Detroit 202           | Canton Twp. 208        | Warren 80            |
| <b>Total 2,814</b>    | <b>Total 3,841</b>     | <b>Total 1,792</b>   |

## Regional residential building permit trend 1st 6 months, 1970-1986



## Don't waste travel dollars

American companies will spend \$85 billion on business travel this year. Unless travel is managed like any other expense, businesses may be wasting money on overpriced airlines, hotels and conference facilities.

Walter Bernard Jr. of the Troy accounting firm of Seidman & Seidman/BDO offers the following tips for effective travel management:

- Designate a travel manager. "The first rule of an effective travel management program is to make sure that there's one person in charge of coordinating all of the company's travel needs."
- Institute a companywide travel policy and make it stick. Specific guidelines on expense limitations, types of accommodations and first-class air travel should be outlined in detail and enforced through adequate documentation and approval requirements. Policy might include booking hotel stays only at chains where the company can get a corporate rate or booking the best-priced flights irrespective of frequent flyer airline preferences and minor preferences in scheduling.
- Find a good travel agency and use it exclusively. If you make all travel arrangements through one agency, the agency will use its clout to negotiate contracted rates and arrangements on your company's behalf.
- Open a corporate account with a national car rental agency. You may be able to negotiate special rates and other concessions such as free insurance, reduced mileage charges and free upgrades depending on your company's use.

TRAVELERS PURCHASING insurance are reminded by the Better Business Bureau to understand what is

## practically speaking

covered by the policy. The kinds of coverage generally available include:

- Medical/sickness/accident insurance. These policies usually cover travel- and non-travel-related accidents and sickness. Payment is often on the spot, compared to more typical reimbursement policies.
- Baggage and personal possessions. Benefits are payable up to a pre-determined maximum for these items. Some companies also offer coverage for delayed or misdirected baggage.
- Trip cancellation/interruption. This coverage will pay up to the amount selected to help cover non-refundable fees for missed travel arrangements. It may also pay for transportation expenses incurred to reach the final itinerary point, or to rejoin a trip in progress when travel is interrupted for a reason set in the policy.
- Polioes generally cover trip cancellation or interruption for reasons of injury, sickness or death, either in the family or the family of a traveling companion. Other reasons that may be accepted are jury duty, hijacking or missing a departure due to an accident en route to the carrier.
- Flight insurance. This generally pays a pre-set amount for accidental death or injury while traveling as a passenger or on the carrier's property.

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