

## OAKLAND BUSINESS &amp; Finance

## Oakland firms dominate Future 50 awards

BY JANICE TIGAR-KRAMER

**R**obert Kolo, co-owner of World Class Engineered Products Inc. in Southfield, knew his business would succeed, but he didn't expect the enormous growth so fast.

Kolo and partner Judith Denton started World Class, a worldwide distributor of industrial rubber and plastics, from their cars in 1992. Between stops at customer's plants, the two sent confirmations to clients and suppliers via portable fax. The firm's 1992 sales volume was \$500,000, a remarkable achievement for a two-person operation that used a post-office box for business correspondence and billings.

Today, World Class employs 35, including 10 outside sales people. It occupies a 22,000-square-foot building in an industrial complex at Telegraph and Eight Mile. The distributor is on the brink of opening a second location in Redford Township. Plans call for continued growth through the acquisition of other distributors, Kolo said. The firm's 1993 sales volume was \$10 million; anticipated gross revenue for 1994 is a whopping \$64 million.

World Class is one of 31 thriving Oakland County businesses that swept the 1995 Future 50 of Greater Detroit awards, which go to Southeast Michigan's top producing businesses and most promising new firms.

The second annual Future 50 awards were co-sponsored by the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce, BDO Seidman, LLP, Troy, and Southfield-based WWJ Newsradio 960.

World Class, a two-time winner of the award, attributes its continued success to reliable service — giving customers what they want when they need it. That philosophy, Kolo said, has earned the firm a reputation for being "all things to all people."

"Our growth is exciting. We now have 35 employees whose way of life depends on the success of World Class," said Kolo, an Orchard Lake resident.

This year's Future 50 award winners represent a range of businesses, including 12 from computer service fields. Other winners include retailers, restaurants, motorsports sales, consultants and engineers. The winning firms employ 11 to 800 people. McFarland Florist & Greenhouses, Inc., Farmington Hills, is a two-time Future 50 award winner. Owner Mary Lore bought the 67-year-old business from the original owner in 1992 and opened a Dearborn branch in March 1995. The Farmington Hills store's 1994 sales volume was \$500,000.

"The store's focus is teamwork. Everything in the store is important — from taking an order to the delivery," said Mary Bowler, McFarland's vice president and

corporate sales manager.

McFarland's employs 20 people, including three floral designers. Last year, the store was named Floral Marketer of the Year by the Society of American Florists and Floral Management magazine.

The Botsford Inn's 55 employees will share its Future 50 award, said Creon Smith, owner of the 156-year-old Farmington Hills Inn. Smith said when he took over the Botsford Inn in 1993, it was already a gem that had earned a position in the community.

"I thought the Inn to preserve its history, but I don't feel like I own it," Smith said. "It is owned by the people who stay here. So many local people have ties to the Botsford because they've celebrated an important event here."

Smith is the Inn's sixth owner. Among the Botsford's prominent owners was Henry Ford in 1924.

Smith said he hasn't changed the Inn; he's only enhanced, finetuned and restored what was already in place. For example, he's lived up to the restaurant's menu and decor and updated hotel entertainment to include jazz, country dancing and concerts. He's also placed a copy of "150 Years of Botsford Inn," by former long-time Farmington Hills resident Jean Fox, throughout the hotel.

"I don't like the word change, but to be successful, you have to be sensitive to the public pulse. If you don't offer people what they want, they'll go elsewhere," said Smith, who co-owned Plymouth's Mayflower Hotel for 25 years.

Smith expects the Botsford's 1995 gross revenue to reach \$1.2 million.

The owners of Paul Cicchini Custom Clothier in Birmingham appreciate their Future 50 award because "it proves a small company can do a good job and be competitive," said Steve Run, who bought the 46-year-old shop in 1989 with partner Rick DePanica.

Founder Paul Cicchini still works in the shop 3 1/2 days a week, while six outside sales people bring fabric swatches to customers' offices and do a complete fitting. The store carries some ready-made top coats, sweaters, ties and shoes, but 95 percent of the custom clothes are sold in clients' offices. The store also employs two full-time costmakers. Russo credits the store's success to old-fashioned customer



FILE PHOTO

At the helm: Creon Smith, owner of the Botsford Inn, Farmington Hills, has positioned the historic hotel for the 21st century by revving up the menu and entertainment.

service. He said most of Cicchini's customers don't have time to shop because their careers are generally demanding.

"Our customer prefer dealing with a smaller store," Russo said. "To us, every customer is important because we want the return business."

Cicchini's has about 2,500 regular customers who pay \$450 to \$2,000 for a made-to-measure suit. The custom clothier's sales are expected to reach more than \$2 million this year.

Future 50 of Greater Detroit nominees must be located in Southeast Michigan, be no more than 10 years old, employ at least 10 people, have a minimum \$500,000 sales volume, have achieved at least 10 percent growth in full-time employment in the last fiscal year, and expect another 10 percent employment

growth in the next three years. All nominees are profit-making businesses.

Howard Allenberg, managing director for BDO Seidman, said the Future 50 winners are successful "despite rapidly rising health-care costs, the challenge of attracting and retaining qualified employees and ever-increasing demands for quality customer service."

Other 1995 Future 50 winners from Oakland County are Automated Time Systems, Southfield; Bank of Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Hills; Bombay Gemological Laboratory, Troy; CDI Computer Services, Troy; Control Power-Reliance, Troy; CTA Accounting, Troy; Data Communications Corp., Troy; Eldercare, Bingham Farms; Engineering Services Group, Farmington Hills; Executec Resource Consultants,

Troy; Executrain, Southfield; Interior Dynamics, Troy; Matrix Computer Systems, Troy; Paul Cicchini Custom Clothier, Birmingham; Peter Basco Associates, Troy; Pyramid Solutions, Troy; Quality Computer Services, Troy; RLM Environmental Services, Farmington Hills; Romar Industries, Walled Lake; S. Yanguyian & Associates, Southfield; Saturn Electronics & Engineering, Auburn Hills; SLP Engineering, Troy; Stedinger Co., Troy; Tekstar, Auburn Hills; Team Resources, Auburn Hills; Technical Solutions, Troy; Virtual Physicians Association, Southfield.

Oakland County's other two-time award winners are Automated Time Systems, CDI Computer Services, Eldercare, Executec and Pyramid Solutions.

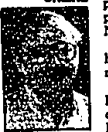
Growing venture: Founders Robert Kolo (right) and Judith Denton started World Class Engineered Products, Southfield, on a shoestring. Today, the firm employs 35 and is on the brink of opening a second location.



JERRY ZIMANSKY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Insights may help organize Netscape bookmarks

ONLINE



EMORY DANIELS

was to writing about powering up Netscape for sound and video clips. And maybe even as a news reader, and mailer. There's so many things to share with you right now that I hesitate to offer a two-part on anything.

As we all know by now, the great thing about surfing is the wonderful discoveries (jewels) we happen upon. Early on, a year or so ago, I suggested keeping a notebook near your computer and Web address. At that time, that's what I did and it worked pretty good. But I haven't looked at that

notebook for some time and I bet you haven't looked at yours neither.

The reason, of course, is that Web browsers allow us to "record" the site address (Universal Resource Locator) on a hot list or as a bookmark so it can easily be re-visited another time. And bookmarking works so well, why keep a notebook?

However, there are at least two problems with bookmarking — both related to the nature of surfing. First, because surfing is random, the recording of our hot spots also is random. And so we end up with a list of bookmarks with no logical pattern. The other is that the list very quickly gets long and it's hard to find a particular item.

Within a couple of months, I end up with a list of bookmarks that is quite unmanageable. I've heard users talk about organizing their bookmarks — categorizing, rearranging, etc., much like outlining. A friend of mine, who's been surfing for a far shorter time than I, intuitively discovered how

to organize Netscape bookmarks. For me, it was not intuitive at all!

The key to organizing bookmarks is the use of headers. So many of the general categories (headers) under which various sites can be grouped. Categories might be SuperSites, Internet, Newspapers, Booksites, Sports, History, Religion, Reference, Educational, Movies, SearchTools, General, etc.

Click on "Bookmarks" and then click on "View Bookmarks." Then select the "Edit" button in the lower-right corner. In the Edit Box, click on "New Header" and type "Newspapers." That particular header will appear in your bookmark window on the left. In the bookmark window, scroll to "online.com," and click on it.

Go to the "Up" button at the bottom left (above "Close" and "Find") and click on it. Each time you click, the highlighted item moves up one space. Keep clicking until you move it up underneath the "Newspaper" header. Scroll to "NandoNet" and move it

up below "online.com," etc. Soon, you have all your e-papers grouped under that heading.

Repeat these steps until all your sites are grouped under headers. If you found the "Up" button, you also found the "Down" button to the right and have learned to navigate down as well. Once all your sites are sorted, go to the bottom of each category and select the last item. Then select "Edit" and in the Edit Box choose "New Separator" and click. A dotted line appears at the bottom of that category to separate it from others. Each site will be indented under the header that, with the separator lines, display your categories as visual groups. Now, it is much easier to scroll to the desired URL.

Play around and you discover other little tricks. For instance, if you highlight a header and click on up or down all the items in that category move along with the header. Likewise, if you highlight a header and then go to Edit and click on "Remove Item" than all

the items under that header will be deleted. You likely don't want to do that so Netscape will prompt you to learn of your real intentions.

And find out what happens when you double-click on a header... neat, huh? The header remains and all the items underneath it disappear. A plus-sign appears to the left of the header. Double-click again and all the missing URLs under the header re-appear. This is a handy way to shorten a long list and then "unfold" only the portions you need to look at.

You can make your bookmark list the "home page" that appears automatically when Netscape loads up. Go to the Options menu, choose Preferences, and then the Styles box. In the home page location window, enter file:///c:/Netscape/bookmark.htm or whatever your path is.

When your list gets long, save it on a floppy disk. Go to File, then to Open, File, and then double-click on "Bookmark.htm" and the list appears on your screen. Then

choose "Save As" and enter A:/Bookmark.htm and hit RETURN.

When you update from Netscape 1.2 to Netscape 2, it will be nice to have your bookmark list saved on a floppy so you can save it into your new browser. You can also call up your bookmark list out of a floppy and using hypertext markup language (html) convert your list into a Web Page. My friend learned much of this intuitively. But he's much smarter than me. Much of what I learned in this column was from reading "Netscape Quick Tour for Windows" by Stuart Harris and Gayle Kidder published by Ventana Press.

You can direct questions to Emory Daniels by e-mail with Emory@online.com or fax number 591-7273. To sign up for O&E On-Line, dial (313)591-0903, or "log-in" prompt type "new" and a "Key:" prompt type GLEN2Y. Past columns may be accessed online at <http://online.com/tidemark/emoryd/archive.html>.

## BUSINESS MARKETPLACE

Marketplace features a glimpse of Oakland County business news and notes, including corporate name changes, new products, new stores or office openings, new affiliations, new positions, mergers, acquisitions and new ways of doing business. Write: Business Marketplace, Eclectic Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Our fax number is (810) 644-1314.

## STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

A new scholarship fund, established in conjunction with The Franklin Award, honors this area's finest family-owned business.

nesses. The Franklin Scholarship will initially award \$2,000 to the Lawrence Technological University College of Management, Southfield.

The amount will be evenly distributed to two students enrolled in small business or entrepreneurial management courses of study. Other criteria, established by the university, include a minimum 3.0 grade point average, full-time status and enrollment in either your junior or senior year.

Jointly sponsored by Franklin Bank, the Franklin Award and Scholarship Committee, Corporate Detroit Magazine and Southfield-based WWJ Newsradio, the

1996 Franklin Award and Scholarship will be presented at the second annual banquet on March 28 at the Radisson Town Plaza, Southfield.

To receive a Franklin Award nomination form or for more information, call Rebecca J. Christian or Sylvia Gerathy at (810) 353-6462.

## FRANKLIN AWARD

Nominations are being sought for the second annual Franklin Award, honoring the success and contributions of family-owned businesses.

Sponsored by Southfield-based Franklin Bank, the Franklin

Award and Scholarship Committee, Corporate Detroit Magazine and Southfield-based WWJ Newsradio, the Franklin Award will be presented to southeast Michigan family-owned businesses judged to have best contributed to industry and the community.

Other criteria include multi-generational involvement, innovative business practices and overall work environment.

Three awards will be presented based on number of employees: 1-10, 11-49 and 50 or more. Nominations may be made by anyone. Self-nominations and nominations made on behalf of clients by

attorneys and accountants are welcome. Nominations should be returned to Franklin Bank by Jan. 15.

Applications will be mailed to nominees, to be completed and returned by Feb. 15 with a \$20 application fee. A panel of small business specialists and principals of family-owned businesses will judge the entries Feb. 20-23. Three finalists in each category will be notified before the awards banquet on March 28 with the actual winners revealed at the banquet.

The banquet will be co-anchored by local business radio and television news personality

Murray Feldman of Farmington Hills and, from Philadelphia, "Benjamin Franklin."

Tickets for the banquet, at the Radisson Plaza Hotel, 1500 Town Center, Southfield, are \$100 per person.

For more information regarding the 1996 Franklin Award, or to receive a nomination form, call Rebecca Christian or Sylvia Gerathy at (810) 353-6462.

## CAVIER AND WINE

The Southfield Chamber of Commerce will host Cavier and Wine Tasting during its regular

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