

# BUSINESS

THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1993

## SUBURBAN BUSINESS LEADERS

### Be Safe Duo rings off Bell for job safety firm

■ A pair of former Michigan Bell employees are hoping business will put their money where their mouths are when it comes to safety issues.

**By DOUG FUNKE**  
STAFF WRITER

It's not state and federal inspectors who present the greatest financial threat to businesses with unsafe working conditions.

It's injuries on the job, loss of productivity and the possibility of higher insurance premiums that cause bigger and more lasting headaches.

That's the conclusion of Michael E. Cole and Frank E. Russell, former Michigan Bell employees who are principals in a fledgling consulting firm, Be Safe Inc.

Cole, 44, a Troy resident, worked at the phone company for 24 years, most recently in technical training. Russell, 52, of Canton, served 26 years, most recently in corporate safety.

Both accepted job buyouts a year and a half ago and went into business for themselves.

"A lot of people figure safety programs take a horrendous amount of time," Cole said. "You can make it take a lot of time, so overbearing, that you have a body to throw at it full time."

"If properly presented, we think we can get people working safely on the job and off the job," he added.

Said Russell: "I really believe that no company has the intention of getting their employees hurt."

**\$20,000 and a dream**  
The partners pooled about \$20,000

from their buyout packages to start the business, purchasing computers, facsimile machines, beepers and safety standard books.

They currently have an office in Cole's house.

Cole and Russell found a guinea pig in Leannu Printing while pulling their business plans together and still working for Bell.

"We were trying to get a feel for how much time is involved in each phase of the project," Cole said. "What we ended up with is a generic package, all the little pieces you would need to implement a program, train people."

"All material went right into a word processor. It will always be customized," he said.

The basic four-point plan consists of an on-premise safety review, correcting violations in the work place, development of a written safety plan, and, if necessary, a training phase.

Costs vary greatly depending on the scope of the job, Cole said. A simple walk-through safety inspection at a small factory could start at about \$250, a written safety plan at \$2,000-\$3,000.

#### MCI got the ball rolling

Russell and Cole picked up their first and, so far, biggest client, MCI, just before launching their business. MCI acquired Western Union and had no experience in manhole safety, Cole said.

The two heard about that development through the professional grapevine, made a presentation and got the job.

Last year, while working out the bugs and scavenging for clients, Be Safe had sales between \$30,000 and \$40,000, Cole said. The goal this year is \$150,000-\$200,000.



Looking things over: Frank E. Russell (left) and Michael E. Cole, who design and implement business safety programs, check over a press at Paul Lesnau's printing shop.

networking committees," said Cindy Hanson, Cole's wife and the only other person currently involved in the firm.

They also attend trade shows, advertise in business specialty publications and mail out brochures.

Even though their first client was a giant, the prime target group is job shops with a small employee base.

"We do some cold calling, radio advertising, word of mouth. We're in

See SAFE, 10B

Tod D. Wasson, executive vice president and chief operating officer of William Beaumont Hospital, has been elected to the board of trustees at GMI Engineering & Management Institute in Flint.



Tod D. Wasson

Wasson, who will serve a three-year term, is responsible for financial operations and administration of Beaumont's two hospitals, three nursing homes, four medical office buildings, a primary health-care clinic, and rehabilitation and health center.

Howard Novetsky, a Sales Associate with ERA Rymal Symes in West Bloomfield, has received national recognition from Electronic Realty Associates, L.P. (ERA Real Estate), for outstanding sales performance during 1992.



Howard Novetsky

Manpower Temporary Services of Southfield has promoted Lisa McMurray to the position of Alliance Program Director of Manpower's exclusive contract for Administrative Support for IBM's Trading Area Four.



Lisa McMurray

As Alliance Program Director, McMurray directs the administration of the Administrative Support Contract, including management of the on-site Supervisors. In addition, she oversees Manpower's state-of-the-art interviewing, testing and training programs.

To submit materials to this column, please send a brief biographical summary along with a black-and-white photo, if possible, to Business Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. There is no charge.

## Conference aims to take mystery out of exporting

By DOUG FUNKE  
STAFF WRITER

Exporting services don't have to be a mysterious or gut-wrenching experience, as a one-day conference on selling in foreign markets will try to explain.

With Canada just a short drive away from the Observer & Eccentric coverage area, it may be worthy of look-see and the \$95 registration fee.

The conference, scheduled 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday at the Radisson Hotel Pontchartrain in Detroit, is co-sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Comerica Bank, Central Business District Association and AT&T Commercial Markets.

"We're not closing the door on anybody, but it's kind of targeted to women business owners who have a service business," said John O'Gara, an international trade officer with the Small Business Administration.

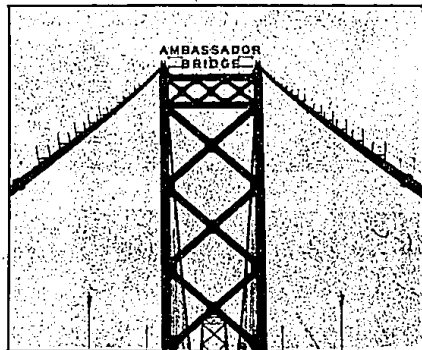
"Typically, you would characterize an exporter as a manufacturer with an end product. It's appropriate for services as well," he said, identifying architectural and environmental evaluation services as two possibilities.

"It's not really a mystery, it's just fear of the unknown," O'Gara said of the exporting process. "It's a foreign country, a foreign culture — how do you get paid?"

"If you look at it all at once, it looks formidable. What you have to do is take it in pieces. There's steps you go through. It need not be more difficult from domestic business," O'Gara said.

Women have made strides, but still have a way to go in the business world, said Diane Edgcomb, president of the Central Business District Association.

"I don't feel there are a lot of new jobs coming out in the future," she said. "Women have to become independent themselves. I think this gives women the opportunity to do things they might not have felt possible before. This allows the opportunity to become a trader. Global thinking is just as important as domestic thinking. You can't isolate yourself," Edgcomb said.



Export woes? Doing business across the Ambassador Bridge or any other border doesn't have to be tough duty. A seminar sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration offers useful tips.

Morning concurrent seminars include "Learning to Go International: Seven Steps to Exporting," "Easy Entry to Mexico and Canada: How Will NAFTA Affect the Service Industries?" and "How to Benefit from Trade Shows and Missions."

Concurrent afternoon seminars include "Getting in Touch with the World: Methods of Communicating with Your Customers," "Selling Abroad: Creating a Presence in the Global Market," and "Bridging the Cultural Gap."

A panel discussion during breakfast will feature business owners who have successfully exported their services.

During lunch, Florine Mark, president of WW Group headquartered in Farmington Hills, will share her experiences of entering the Mexican market with the Weight Watchers program.

learned the culture, understood the people.

"We are different and we have to understand and respect each others' differences," Mark said. "I think learning the language is very important."

All attendees will participate in a closing session "Putting it All Together: Creating an Export Plan," "Preparing for Tax Implications and Learning Financial Options."

A reception and informal networking session will cap the day. People may register by contacting Daral Martin of the CBDA at 961-1403 during business hours.

"We estimate that 40-45 percent of all small businesses by the year 2000 will be woman owned," O'Gara said. "Typically, women-owned businesses are service type business."

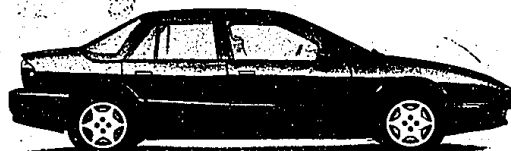
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