

MARKETPLACE

Marketplace features news and notes from the suburban business community. Write: Marketplace, Business, Observer & Eclectic Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Our fax number is 313-591-7279.

IN TOP 500

172 Ford Shops of Southfield ranks 42nd on Inc. Magazine's 1993 list of 500 fastest-growing privately held companies. The largest discount greeting card chain in the Midwest, it has 30

stores in Michigan and Ohio. It ranked as Michigan's second fastest-growing company. Flexible Plan Investments of Michigan in Bloomfield Hills ranks 231st. Incorporated as an investment adviser in 1981, Flexi-

ble specializes in market timing. It manages \$150 million of mutual fund accounts for individual, corporate and pension plan clients. Rock Financial Corp. ranks 369th. The mortgage bank, founded in 1985 and headquartered in Bingham Farms, will open a Canton branch in mid-October. One of southeast Michigan's top residential lenders, it has projected 1993 closings of nearly \$1 billion.

Southfield-based NTC Laser Machine Group, Marubeni America Corp. T. Bryce of Plymouth, Minn., will represent the manufacturer in six Midwest states.

CALLING ALL DESIGNERS

Art Interior Systems, a Bloomfield Hills company that supplies commissioned paintings and murals to businesses and residences, also will start working with interior designers and art consultants. For information, call Karen Halpern, company president and designer, at 313-851-8215.

ENTECH EXPANDS

Troy-based Entech Personnel Services, Inc. has purchased Entech Services, Inc., a temporary and contract personnel employment agency. Entech Personnel Services now has eight metro-Detroit locations, including Southfield, Livonia and Troy.

TURF'S UP

3-Dimensional Services, a Rochester Hills engineering and manufacturing firm, and Michigan State University have developed a natural-grass playing surface for enclosed sports stadiums.

Turf Box Pallet System is made of a series of shallow, hexagonal-shaped boxes filled with sod. Each box (resembling a flat of nursery plants) is made of high-strength, lightweight steel and measures 7 1/2 feet across.

Installing the indoor pallets is similar to placing basketball flooring over the ice in indoor arenas. The pallet's accurate fit allows sod to fit tightly, giving a virtually seamless surface.

"The system gives indoor and open-air stadiums greater design flexibility with respect to the events they can handle, providing the ability to switch playing surfaces quickly," said Alan Peterson, 3-Dimensional sales manager.

Factory from page 1C

And getting closer to the customer is a natural outgrowth of that as the supply business evolves, Ross said. Manufacturers are squeezing suppliers and suppliers have to trim their own costs.

"More and more is getting attached to the speaker," he said. "It's changing from the size of a pocketbook or a small book to the size of a tennis racket."

"We're attaching brackets, grilles. If we shipped them like that from Lumberton, we would be shipping a lot of air," Ross said.

"Complexity lends itself to Heinich's operation, where he is very light on his feet and can switch over to various colors and brackets very quickly," Ross said.

"Being here in Livonia, we've never had to make an air shipment to Wayne Assembly," Hein-

ich said. "We can get it out of here and it will be to them in 20 minutes. It cuts transportation costs."

"My accountant tells me we're making money now," Heinich said. "More parts through the building would reduce our overhead. One more job, we'd definitely be competitive with the big plant (in Lumberton)."

"It's a constant struggle to keep costs down," he said. "We've been fortunate to be on the right vehicles."

LANDS CONTRACT

USMaintenance Corp. was awarded the janitorial service contract for U.S. Steel in Gary, Ind., the largest steel plant in North America.

USMaintenance is headquartered in Oak Park and has a Southfield office.

NEW LASER REP

T. Bryce & Associates will sell and service industrial processing laser systems manufactured by

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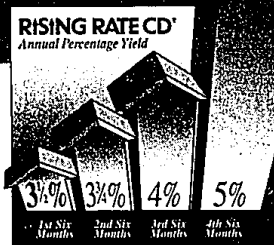
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