

BUILDING & BUSINESS

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BUILDING & BUSINESS OBSERVER STARS

This column highlights promotions, transfers, hirings and other key personnel moves within the suburban business community. Send a brief biographical summary - including the towns of residency and employment and a black-and-white photo, if desired - to: Stars, Building & Business, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Our fax number is (313) 591-7279.

Thomas Ledue of Garden City is now director of regulatory issues for Michigan Credit Union League, Southfield. He'll advise on compliance issues, direct the regulatory issues staff and work with government regulatory agencies and Credit Union National Association.



Ledue

Margaret Taylor Smith of Birmingham, the first woman elected to The Kresge Foundation's board in 1985, becomes the foundation's first woman chair. Smith, author of "Mother, I Have Something to Tell You," is a board member of Women & Foundations/Corporate Philanthropy.



Smith

Stephen A. Bromberg of Bloomfield Hills becomes chief operating officer of Butzel Long, a Detroit law firm, succeeding Harold A. Ruemennapp of Bloomfield Hills. Ruemennapp remains a shareholder and member of the board of directors and the executive committee.



Bromberg

John M. Rankin of Livonia, production and media manager for Jervis B. Webb Co., Farmington Hills, is Quality Achiever of the month. His responsibilities include producing corporate brochures and developing and implementing target magazine advertising programs.



Rankin

Cynthia Lindsey of Southfield, an attorney for CN North America in Detroit since 1989, was promoted to trial attorney. She's a founding member of the Optimist Club's Riverfront chapter.



Lindsey

See STARS, 2F

More buildings boast polymer panels



A small company that manufactures exterior panels for office buildings is working hard to promote the product to architects and contractors. Polymer synthetic concrete panels offer many advantages over architectural concrete, supporters say.

By DOUG FUNK, STAFF WRITER

Business is picking up for Metro Cast, described by its sales rep as the oldest manufacturer of precast polymer panels in the country.

As architects and commercial builders learn more about the product, business should get even better, said Donato E. Paolucci, who started the company in 1971 and moved to Westland five years ago.

"You have to constantly promote," Paolucci said. "We have to promote to architects where they can specify our product. We never had an association where we pay our dues and someone else promotes."

"Architects really dictate what we're doing," said Al Swerdlow, marketing manager, who projected sales this year in excess of \$2 million.

Polymer concrete - a mixture of sand and resin - is lighter, stronger, more pliable and more water resistant than architectural concrete, a mixture of sand and cement, Paolucci said.

"Our work is mostly for institutional buildings and government projects where the money is," he said. "It's usually not smaller shopping centers where they use cheaper materials."

Projects in process, recently completed or on the drawing board include renovation of the Troy Municipal Building; a new student center at Grand Valley State University near Grand Rapids; a dome for a new church in Canonsburg, Pa.; and two highway patrol buildings off the New Jersey Turnpike.

Five workers at Metro Cast make the precast panels by hand.

They mix the polymer concrete, trowel the mixture into molds and build mounting frames. Finish is determined by design of the mold, the amount and kind of sand added to the mixture and troweling experience.

"It's a skill - more than just pouring concrete," Swerdlow said.

In addition to a smooth cast finish, options include limestone-like finish, sand finish, aggregate stone finish and texture finish.

"When we started out, aggregate panel was the preferred material," Paolucci said. "Now that's out

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Donato E. Paolucci
Metro Cast owner

of favor. People want a smooth finish, lines."

"Smooth but groves. Lines. Something you can see," Swerdlow added.

The panels can be welded or bolted to girders of a building.

Paolucci said he helped research the polymer process when working for Architectural Research in the early 1960s. That company has since gone out of business, he said.

Proponents of the product tout its advantages.

"This material, sand and polymer, doesn't absorb water," said

See POLYMER, 2F



Mixing product: Above, Vitorio Muglia of Metro Cast adds sand to resin to produce a polymer concrete mixture.

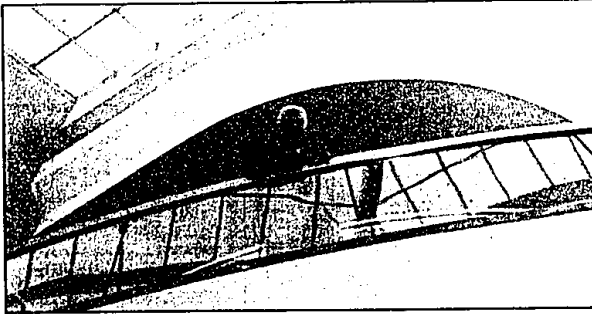


STAFF PHOTO BY JIM JAGGFIELD

Finish selections: Left, Donato E. Paolucci, owner of Metro Cast, shows off some of the different finishes available on polymer concrete panels.

Escrow fallout:

William R. Yaw Jr., a vice president with Standard Federal Bank, describes how the new state school financing plan affected his bank and its customers.



JIM RIDEWITZ/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Proposal A to affect summer taxes

By DOUG FUNK, STAFF WRITER

The final fallout from the great school financing explosion in Michigan is about to drift into suburbia.

Summer tax bills, reflecting a dramatic cut in school property taxes for most homeowners, are due out in July.

This is the first billing notice individuals and mortgage lenders will receive since school property taxes were eliminated by the Legislature in 1993, then partially restored by voters in March via Proposal A.

Homeowners who pay their taxes through escrow accounts serviced by financial institutions have been affected. So, too, have banks and savings & loans.

Standard Federal Bank, headquartered in Troy, is the mortgage volume leader in Michigan both in number of loans and dollar amount.



"We do more lending than the next three in total - ABD, a bank and First Federal (of Michigan)," said William R. Yaw Jr., senior vice president and director of marketing for Standard Federal Bank.

The bank services some 221,000 mortgages nationwide, most in Michigan, with an aggregate value of \$1.7 billion, he said. Branches are located in every Observer & Eccentric community.

Following are edited excerpts from a recent interview with Yaw:

What were the thoughts here at the bank as the school financing drama unfolded?

Yaw: I don't think we'd want to take a political position. All we had to do was follow it and stay on top of whatever came out. If it were better (to finance) with a sales tax and transfer tax, so be it.

There were no computer program adjustments of major consequence, nothing that we had to collect any differently.

So what happened to escrow accounts?

Yaw: Escrow analysts typically is done after the first of the year, as soon as your winter tax bills are paid. After we did that, we had to make a readjustment (cut) by state

See PROPOSAL, 2F

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