

# Supporting women

## Farmington business owner honored with ATHENA Award

BY JOANNE MALIJEWSKI  
STAFF WRITER  
jmalizewski@oe.homecomm.net

If you ask Laura Rembisz, planning your future is pretty much like planning a road trip - or at least it should be.

First, map out your goals or your destination; stay on course; and along the way have some good friends to give support and warmth, much "like roadside service," Rembisz said.

The owner of RemTech Business Solutions offered her advice as she was honored with the annual ATHENA Award by the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce.

"Laura is truly a deer, not a talker," said Linda Jolicœur, who nominated Rembisz for the award. "Laura gets in, rolls up her sleeves and does her job."

The purpose of the ATHENA award is to honor someone in the community who demonstrates support of the personal and professional goals of women; provides a valuable service to their business or profession and contributes to the stability and improvement of the community; and demonstrates excellence in their business or profession.

Rembisz started her business in 1996. It specializes in contract and direct-hire personnel for the technology industry. Her company has doubled its size almost every year by using honesty, integrity and respect. Jolicœur said.

She also serves as president of Detroit ORACLE Users Group, a professional development program for people in the information technology field. She also serves as a volunteer for the Oakland County Special Olympics and for TEAM Farmington Golf.

She, as well as a number of other women who have received



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DRESELER

The winner: Laura Rembisz (right) is all smiles after receiving the ATHENA Award. Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce President Carleigh Flaharty presented Laura with roses to cap off the afternoon's ceremony.

the ATHENA award, is a member of the Professional Women's Roundtable.

"You made a profound impact on my life," Rembisz told roundtable members at the luncheon.

Rembisz was also honored with plaques from the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills, as well as the United States Senate, the state of Michigan and the Oakland County Commission.

The ATHENA award was named after the mythological Greek goddess of wisdom and was started by Lansing Realtor Martha Mertz. When Mertz joined the Lansing chamber she discovered she was the only female member.

"Only once in 75 years had that chamber ever honored a woman," said Merideth Reynolds

of the ATHENA Foundation.

Mertz started the ATHENA award in the Lansing Chamber of Commerce in 1982. Over the years of her involvement with the chamber, she witnessed the number of businesses owned by women grow by 300 percent,

Reynolds said. The ATHENA award is typically supported by Oldsmobile,



Speaking: Merideth Reynolds of the ATHENA Foundation addresses the audience. The award statue, known for its graceful design, is in the foreground.

which Mertz approached to help make the ATHENA Foundation grow.

In the local program, Bob Saks Oldsmobile is the award sponsor. "We so appreciate that support nationally and locally," Reynolds

added.

Former ATHENA award winners include Sharon Hain-Gaber, Nurten Ural, Linda Jolicœur, Sandra Hermanoff, Deborah Grant, Beverly Papai and the late Lynda Mylnarek.

## Commerce from page A1

will be local businesses, each having their own Web site within the e-mail. These same merchants already have stores right around the corner from our readers. So shoppers at hometown-mall.com can either do their shopping from home - 24 hours a day, seven days a week - or run down to the local store to check out an item they see on the Web.

"What's special about this approach is that it links familiar local businesses with readers of our hometown newspapers through the device of a local electronic mall. It's not something abstract and distant, the way most e-commerce feels today, or even prone to risk of abuse or fraud," Power said. "We'll start with local merchants whose stores are familiar to our readers. We'll provide them with Web page design and hosting services in our e-mail. And we'll connect them with our readers through regular promotions in our trusted hometown newspapers," Power added.

"A strong Internet presence is vital for any company these days. But there are lots of local businesses that want to get on the Web but don't quite know how to do it or figure it just costs too much," Power explained. "We think we can help these folks out and, at the same time, provide a real service to our local readers."

According to Dave Morin, HomeTown's Vice President for

Technology, all the Internet activities now located in the various newspapers of the group will eventually be transferred to hometowndigital.com, the new corporation. "We think it's far better for our digital staff to concentrate solely on Internet applications and e-commerce in a corporate environment quite distinct from our newspapers," he explained.

Morin also said he is looking for able, energetic and entrepreneurial people to join the new company.

"For people who want to be part of the most exciting industry in the world today, this is an ideal opportunity. Right now, we're looking for a general manager to build and drive the organization. It's a terrific opportunity to get in on the ground floor of the most exciting Internet organization in the region."

Morin can be reached by e-mail at dmorin@homecomm.net. Morin explained that the new company would be incorporated within HomeTown Communications Network on the idea that, if successful, it might be spun out and taken public at some future date.

Offices for hometowndigital.com will be located in Southwestern Michigan, currently a hotbed of Internet and information technology organizations. Morin said he is looking for space in Ann Arbor, Royal Oak or Birmingham.

## Licenses from page A2

Licenses are authorized by the Liquor Control Commission, based on population, and the 2000 census results will be known by then.

However, Ellis reiterated his frustration with the licenses held in escrow, a complaint expressed the last time licenses came up for approval in January. The problem, he said, is that businesses consider their licenses a piece of property right once they've been granted.

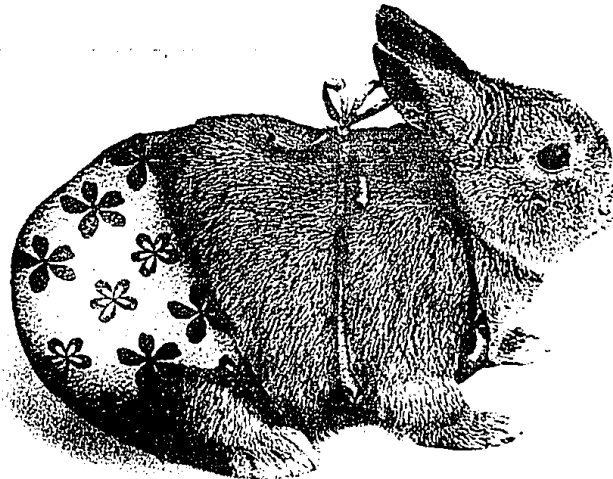
According to Linda Wood, who serves as secretary to the director of licensing in Lansing, companies that won't be using their licenses for a period of time can place them in escrow, which keeps them active. Escrowing can be done in the case of remodeling or relocation, or if the license holder goes out of busi-

ness.

"It's still their license," Wood said. "After a year, they have to request an extension and give their reasons to the commission. I've seen them go four or five years. It just depends."

Escrowed licenses may be sold, and therein lies the rub, according to Hills officials. Companies will hold onto them as an asset, even if they're no longer in business. Their worth depends on the market, Wood said. "If there are licenses available, obviously, the license isn't worth much," she commented. While the commission has received complaints from communities about escrowed licenses, changing the practice - Ellis suggested limiting escrows to one year - would mean changing state law, Wood added.

(Calling all beach bunnies!)



Swimwear Clearance

30% off\*

in-season styles from Women's Sportswear & Ms. J.  
Better get hopping!

\*Savings off original prices of selected styles. No adjustments made on prior purchases.

# Jacobson's

Birmingham • (248) 844-6900 Livonia • (734) 591-7696 Rochester • (248) 651-6000

SHOPPING HOURS • MON-SAT 10-9 • OPEN SUN AT NOON

www.jacobsons.com