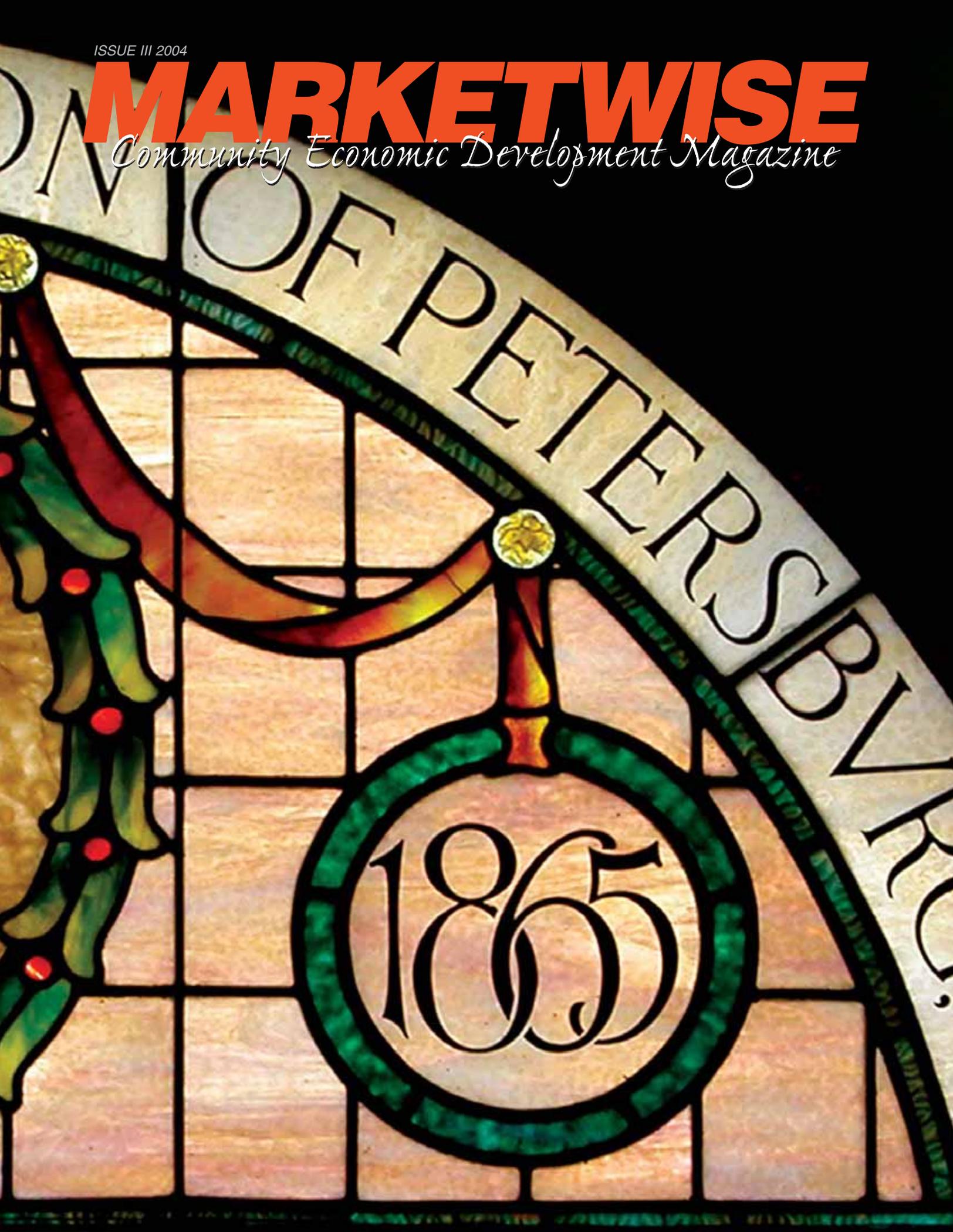


ISSUE III 2004

MARKETWISE

Community Economic Development Magazine



Inside...



1

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Art Smart:

Creativity stimulates development in Petersburg, Virginia.



18

PEOPLE

People:

MARKETWISE talks to researcher C. Theodore Koebel.



20

SMALL BUSINESS

Owners Share Success Stories:

Entrepreneurs aim high and gain big in West Virginia.



30

RESEARCHER'S CORNER

Researcher's Corner:

Find brief summaries of research in the field.



32

REVITALIZATION

The Barracks Row Brigade:

Partners share the resurgence of a Washington, DC, neighborhood.



42

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Riding the High Wave:

FRCDC combines community development and culture in coastal South Carolina.

On the cover: "Detail of the Ladies Memorial Association" window at Blandford Church in Petersburg, Virginia, designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany, memorializes casualties of war. Designated as a Preserve America Community by the White House, Petersburg has historic properties from three centuries that are located in six districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

(Permission to reproduce windows granted by Petersburg Museums.)

A new year



is on the horizon. Resolutions will be made and unfortunately be broken. But one thing's for sure: this time of year causes people to seriously evaluate their current state and think about change. In this issue of MARKETWISE, the CAO is taking one step into new territory as we introduce two new ongoing sections — "People"

and the "Researcher's Corner." People will give readers a close look at the life and work of a community development professional. Dr. C. Theodore Koebel, a professor and director for the Center for Housing Research at Virginia Tech proves to be a worthy inaugural candidate. I'm sure you will enjoy his insightful comments. For those with a hearty appetite for quantitative data, the "Researcher's Corner" provides a "sneak peek" at some rich data that's available about various community development topics.

The willingness to explore new avenues does not necessarily mean abandoning all current and prosperous practices. We will continue to include success stories that inspire organizations to reach new heights. Our feature story, "Petersburg Rediscovered," explores the journey that the city is taking to integrate arts and the undying spirit of people into the fabric of an area faced with common community development challenges. In West Virginia, residents who have been affected by unexpected life-altering situations such as displacements or have the desire to explore entrepreneurship have found valuable support from the state's small business development centers. For many years, stakeholders in Washington, DC, saw that a serious transformation was necessary to revive a declining commercial corridor. And lastly, a South Carolina organization improves communities and, at the same time, teaches valuable cultural lessons. With such great work underway in such different areas it's important to remember that alterations and the road to new directions can be fearful and uncomfortable but a willingness to embrace change can reap immeasurable rewards.

Jennie W. Blizzard

MARKETWISE

Dan Tatar

Assistant Vice President and Community Affairs Officer

Jennie Blizzard
Editor

Cindy Elmore
Community Affairs
Writer

Geep Schurman
Designer/Photographer

MARKETWISE is published three times a year by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. Free subscriptions and additional copies are available upon request; address requests to the CAO, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, P.O. Box 27622, Richmond, VA, 23261; or call (804) 697-8457. Material may be reprinted or abstracted provided MARKETWISE is credited. Please provide to the Community Affairs Office a copy of any publication in which material is reprinted. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond or the Federal Reserve System, nor are they meant to imply endorsement of specific investments or programs.



Petersburg Rediscovered

by Cindy Elmore



Art enthusiasts stroll through the Petersburg Regional Art Center chatting with artists and viewing their latest works. Restaurants, antique shops, museums and even the local library hosts hundreds of art lovers that descend upon Petersburg, Virginia, on the second Friday of each month for "Friday for the Arts!" The monthly celebration is one indication that the arts are spurring community economic development in Petersburg, Virginia. Enthused by the new influx of creative endeavors, Gloria Leake, a small business owner believes, "The location is drawing people. Petersburg is a quaint, old-fashioned town like a picture in a storybook. They are coming like it's a magnet. There's definitely something magical here."



The selection at Brickhouse Run, an English pub owned by Steve and Ella Dickenson, tempts diners.

Taking a quick glance at Petersburg, the stardust vanishes for some people. They overlook the city's historic backdrop and see only vacant businesses and homes in disrepair. Never acknowledging the possibilities that lie within Petersburg's citizens, they calculate the disproportionate ratio of renters to homeowners. Without a willingness to get personally involved, some ponder the high school dropout rates, number of single-parent, low-income families and unemployment trends. For these people, the problems in Petersburg outweigh the possibilities.

Fortunately, entrepreneurs are descending upon Petersburg, acknowledging the challenges and seeking creative solutions by tapping into the city's potential. Based on nearly 30 years of experience, Richmond developer, Robin Miller, calls Petersburg "an undiscovered treasure." Known for being the first developer to take a risk to redevelop an area, Miller believes that opportunity abounds in the town that lies in the shadow of Richmond. "You must have a vision. Someone has to go first. If you are successful and there's a good payoff, others will follow," says Miller.

Eclectic Entrepreneurs Embrace Petersburg

Fortunately, Petersburg's historic fabric has attracted people from as far away as France and Madagascar to purchase homes and start new small businesses. The diverse group of transplants possess a creative spirit that has initiated community economic development efforts. Embracing the struggles, this eclectic assembly of citizens sees the possibilities that lie in a city where many see few opportunities.

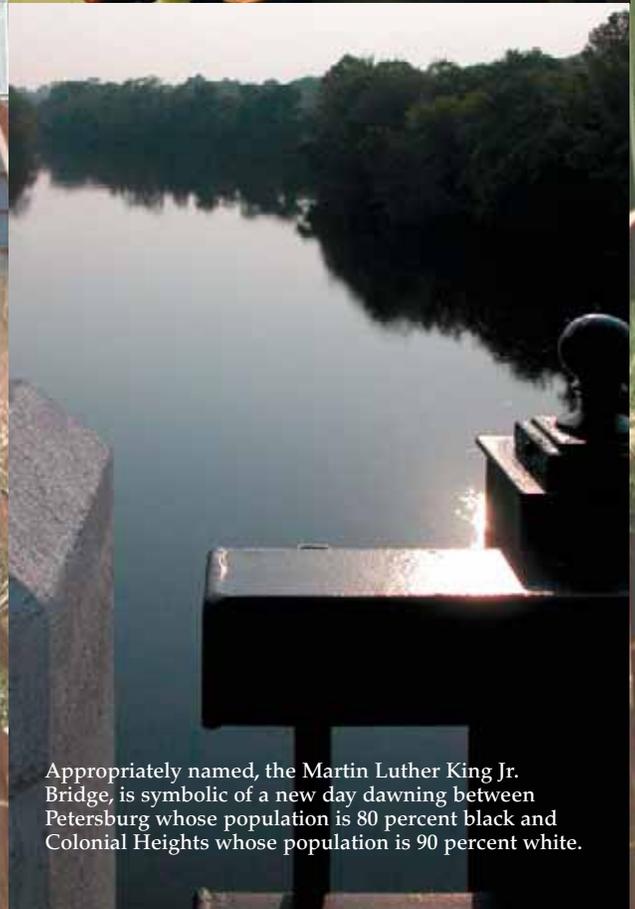
Known for their innovation and pioneering spirit, Tim and Daphne Reid were among the first to accept the challenge of recharging Petersburg. The seasoned actors selected a 60-acre soybean field in the city as the site for New Millennium Studios and launched operations in February 1997. Momentum continued to climb when the Appomattox Regional Governor's School for the Fine Arts and Technology opened its doors to students from 14 school districts in September 1999. Relocating the Shockhoe Bottom Arts Center from Richmond to downtown Petersburg, Rusty Davis converted the former Butterworth's building into the Petersburg Regional Arts Center in July 2003, offering 70 studios to local artists.

Within only a short time, many creative endeavors have been established in Old Towne from the Mercury String Shop with its array of violins, cellos and string bass to the Appomattox Tile Works, which boasts claw-

Symbolizing a renewed spirit in the city, the Martin Luther King Jr. Bridge officially opened in October 2003.



Daphne Reid, Vice President, New Millennium Studios

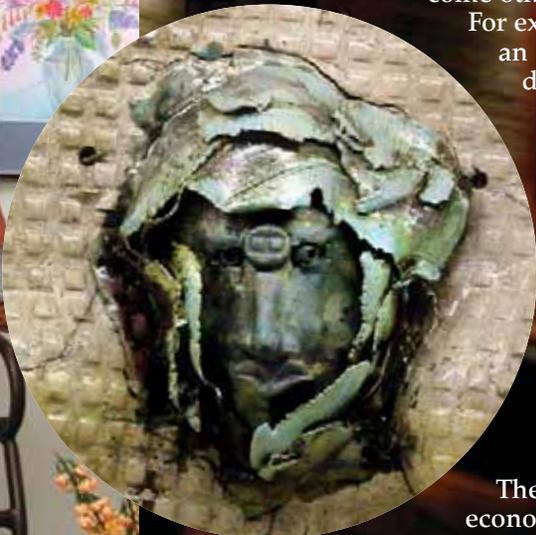


Appropriately named, the Martin Luther King Jr. Bridge is symbolic of a new day dawning between Petersburg whose population is 80 percent black and Colonial Heights whose population is 90 percent white.



footed bathtubs adorned with glitzy tile. A glance in the window of At the Globe with its hand-painted dolls recovering at the Petersburg Doll Hospital makes one realize that business is not as usual in Petersburg. A vintage clothing shop showcasing a collection of rare hats, a coffee shop brewing savory blends and a British pub offering icy cold mugs of English ale with piping hot shepherd's pie are drawing even more newcomers seeking to create a solace for the arts in Petersburg.

The stage in Petersburg is set to welcome other creative entrepreneurs. For example, Christopher Shorr, an accomplished actor and director, plans to open the curtain to the performing arts in the fall of 2005 by incorporating the Mardi Gras décor of the former Betsy's Courtyard into a performing arts venue called Sycamore Rouge. A gourmet grocery store is also planned along with several more art galleries.



The city manager and economic development director also have worked to provide the infrastructure needed for Petersburg's transformation. Symbolizing a renewed spirit in the city, the Martin Luther King Jr. Bridge officially opened in October 2003. Implementing transportation enhancement grants, the city in conjunction with the Historic Petersburg Foundation also installed new sidewalks and period lighting along Grove Avenue, renovated the historic train station and built the Appomattox Heritage Trail, which starts at Pocahontas Island and ends at Virginia State University. The dredging of the Appomattox River in the near future also will open up the city's natural harbor.

Each month, "Friday for the Arts!" attracts hundreds to the new Petersburg Regional Arts Center, located in the former Butterworth's building. Water colorist, Glenda Smith, is one of over 70 artists who display their work at the center.

New Millennium Studios has completed construction of Phase I, which consists of 40,000 square feet of production facilities, including a 15,000-square-foot sound stage, post-production facilities, editing suites, recording studios and a 15-acre backlot.

Film Makers Lead the Way for Creative Pursuits

From a movie studio and an interior design firm to a doll-making business and upholstery shop, many Petersburg small business owners rely on both their creativity and determination to survive. After completing a study within a 30-mile radius of Petersburg, the Reids decided to build New Millennium Studios in Petersburg because it was the most economically feasible location. "We were shown great pieces of land in Petersburg. The land that the studio is on was given to us by the city of Petersburg through the Virginia Department of Economic Development," said Daphne. The only full-service independent studio in the nation, New Millennium Studios has completed construction of Phase I, which consists of 40,000 square feet of production facilities, including a 15,000-square-foot sound stage, post-production facilities, editing suites, recording studios and a 15-acre backlot.

Although New Millennium Studios injected \$15 million into the local economy during the first year of its inception, the business has faced many challenges. "We have had to overcome access to capital since 1997," said Daphne. "The money to start the business came out of our own pockets and from two angel investors."

Devoted to Petersburg's economic development, Ken Roy manages all the facilities and media services for New Millennium Studios while operating a bed and breakfast in Petersburg called La Villa Romaine.



Despite these challenges, the Reids own a home in Petersburg and are committed to community development efforts. Their business employs five, full-time staff members, and offers seasonal employment and internships to college students. The Tim Reid Foundation also provides college scholarships for African-American students. Daphne volunteers with the Girl Scouts and is working on a project targeted toward teenage girls in Petersburg.

Small Businesses Seek Historic Backdrop

Until a tornado hit Old Towne in 1993, the historic landscape was experiencing a healthy revival with antique stores, gift shops and restaurants. After the tornado, many businesses felt hopeless as they watched years of revitalization efforts destroyed and opted to not rebuild their businesses in Old Towne.

One of the few businesses that did rebuild was The Upholstery Workshop, owned by Ivan, Gloria and



A native of New York, Gloria Leake relocated to Petersburg and started an upholstery business. Even in the aftermath of a natural disaster, her upbeat spirit kept her business flourishing.

Dante Leake. Relocating to Petersburg from Long Island, New York, in 1989, the family was attracted to the area by its affordable housing. "We loved the beautiful homes in Petersburg. The house that we purchased in 1989 for \$80,000 would have sold for \$300,000 to \$500,000 in New York. My friends joked that we had bought a mansion," explained Gloria.

The Leakes originally intended to open a school to teach upholstery, but realized that there was a market for an upholstery business. "People told us that there was a need. We didn't have to advertise. Customers came by word of mouth. Soon we were doing work for the Governor's Mansion," said Gloria. Still, the family remained on a strict budget since they were living on one-third of the income they earned in New York. In addition, the business had to rebuild after the tornado. "We had just finished renovating our building in 1992, but thankfully we were fully insured," she said.





Featuring her handmade dolls and antiques, Paula Mims opened At the Globe in July 2000.

Looking for a community in which she could put her creative forces to work, artist and entrepreneur Paula Mims quickly became active in the Historic Petersburg Foundation, the Petersburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority and Downtown Petersburg, Incorporated. After restoring a historic home in the Poplar Lawn neighborhood, she purchased the former Globe Department Store building on Sycamore Street and opened At the Globe in July 2000. With a background in commercial art, Mims' shop features her own handmade dolls and antiques.

Paula Mims, quickly became active in the Historic Petersburg Foundation, the Petersburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority and Downtown Petersburg, Incorporated.

One of Petersburg's treasures, Leon Richardson travels the country delivering his signature floral designs. The multi-talented Richardson also can be heard at "Friday for the Arts!" singing with his jazz ensemble, Tazz Jazz.

Mims' creative vein kept the store afloat during times when traffic in downtown Petersburg was lean. To make her business a success, she reinvented the layout of the store incorporating a snack bar and dining area. She leased a space in the back of the lower level to floral designer, Leon Richardson. In demand across the country, Richardson has delivered floral creations to celebrities and his work is showcased at special events ranging from weddings to awards ceremonies.

In addition, Mims has used the building's historic flair as a backdrop for event rentals. Once a month, she transforms her store into a restaurant with live music to participate in "Friday for the Arts!" Richardson adds his flair by providing the vocals for his jazz ensemble called Tazz Jazz.

Her creativity also increased her assets when she was able to pay off the loan on her business by using the equity she gained through refinancing her home. Mims completed extensive renovations and restoration work on both her home and business increasing the buildings' values. Passionate about her contributions to downtown Petersburg, she said, "I loved the building and I wanted to help the community. I knew that I had to save this historic building," said Mims.

Marcia Sutherland was also attracted to Petersburg and believed in its potential for revitalization so much that she wanted to establish her residence in the same building as her art studio, Beatnik Gallery. However, she had difficulty communicating to bankers her plans



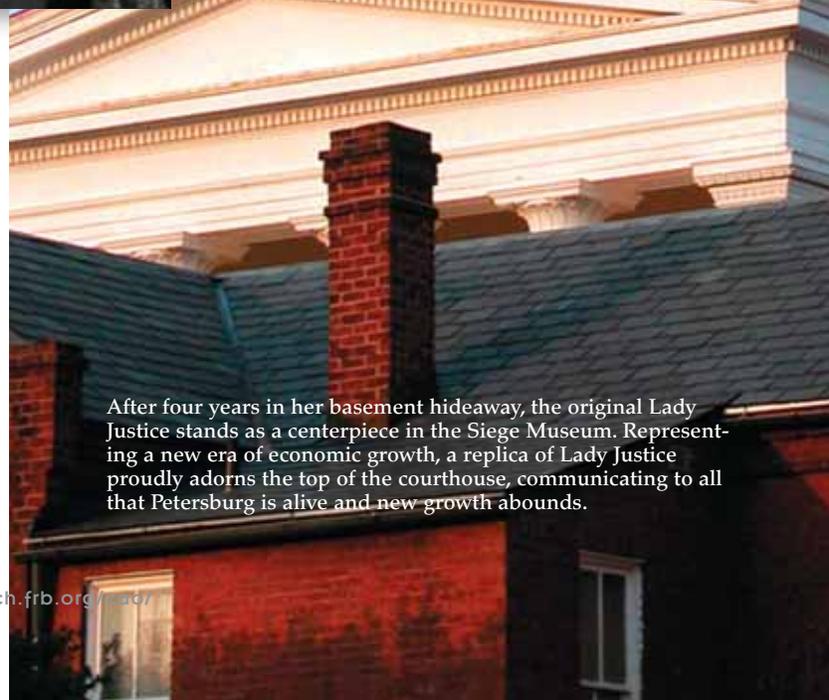
of financing both a home and a business at the same location. "BB&T understood my business concept," said Sutherland. To handle the renovations, BB&T also provided her with an equity line of credit. A first-time business owner, she said, "The location is the best thing about living in Petersburg. I don't have to drive to work."



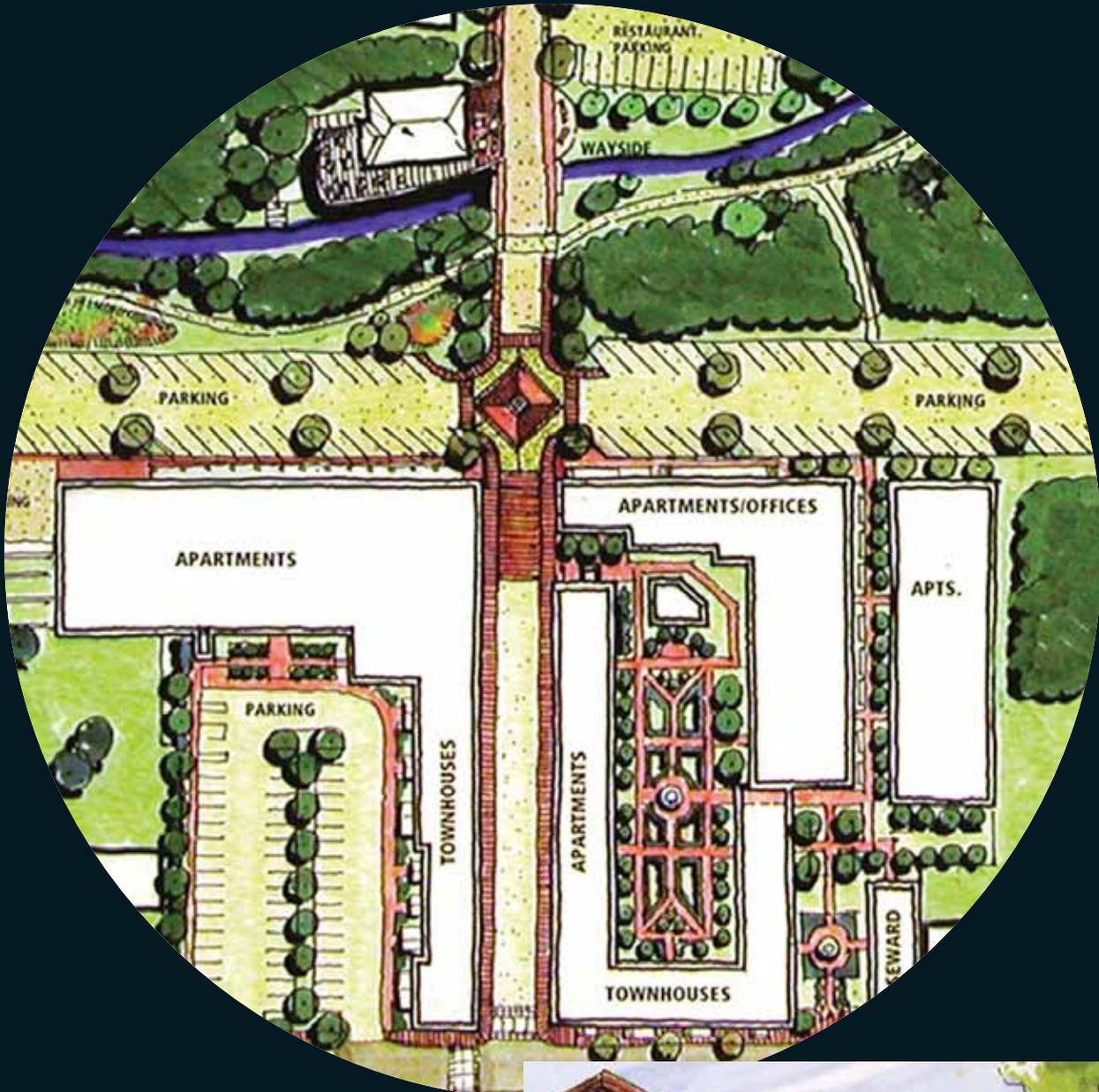
Vandy Jones, Director of Economic Development, City of Petersburg

A Diamond in the Rough

Petersburg community leaders point to positive signs of economic growth. According to David Canada, city manager, "Petersburg is no different from other cities in the challenges that it faces. The overall effort is to facilitate Petersburg's transition from a town based on a large manufacturing sector that was labor intensive, requiring low-skilled workers to one that has a more diverse economic base." In order to achieve this goal, Vandy Jones, director of economic development, has worked to acquire new industries, including Inland Container Corporation, Industrial Galvanizer, Boar's Head, Watson Metals, Diversity Foods, Klockner, Triad,



After four years in her basement hideaway, the original Lady Justice stands as a centerpiece in the Siege Museum. Representing a new era of economic growth, a replica of Lady Justice proudly adorns the top of the courthouse, communicating to all that Petersburg is alive and new growth abounds.



Inframetals and Boehringer Ingelheim Chemicals. "When Brown and Williamson [Tobacco Company] left Petersburg, a large void was created in the economic base. We have tried to refocus the manufacturing base to other areas like steel and pharmaceuticals," said Canada.

In addition, the city has attempted to re-establish the downtown area. "We are a state enterprise zone, so we can offer businesses incentives to relocate," said Canada. According to Robin Miller, who plans to transform the Seward Luggage Factory into market-rate townhouses and apartments, "Things are happening in downtown Petersburg. It's a diamond in the rough."





Pam Hamilton, Owner, Hamilton House Interiors.

“We used to ride by the house and say that we wanted to live here.”

Pam Hamilton

Turning Houses into Homes

Working from her beautifully restored home on Sycamore Street, Pam Hamilton of Hamilton House Interiors is dedicated to making both her business and the revitalization of Petersburg work. Relocating to the city in 1996, Pam and Howard Hamilton lived out of one bedroom of their house while spending months restoring their Victorian treasure. According to Pam, “We used to ride by the house and say that we wanted to live here.” After their children were grown, the Hamiltons made the dream a reality and even restored the house next door for Howard’s mother. Pam has showcased her decorating skills at designer houses in Petersburg. Her beautiful window treatments grace homes throughout the Tri-Cities.

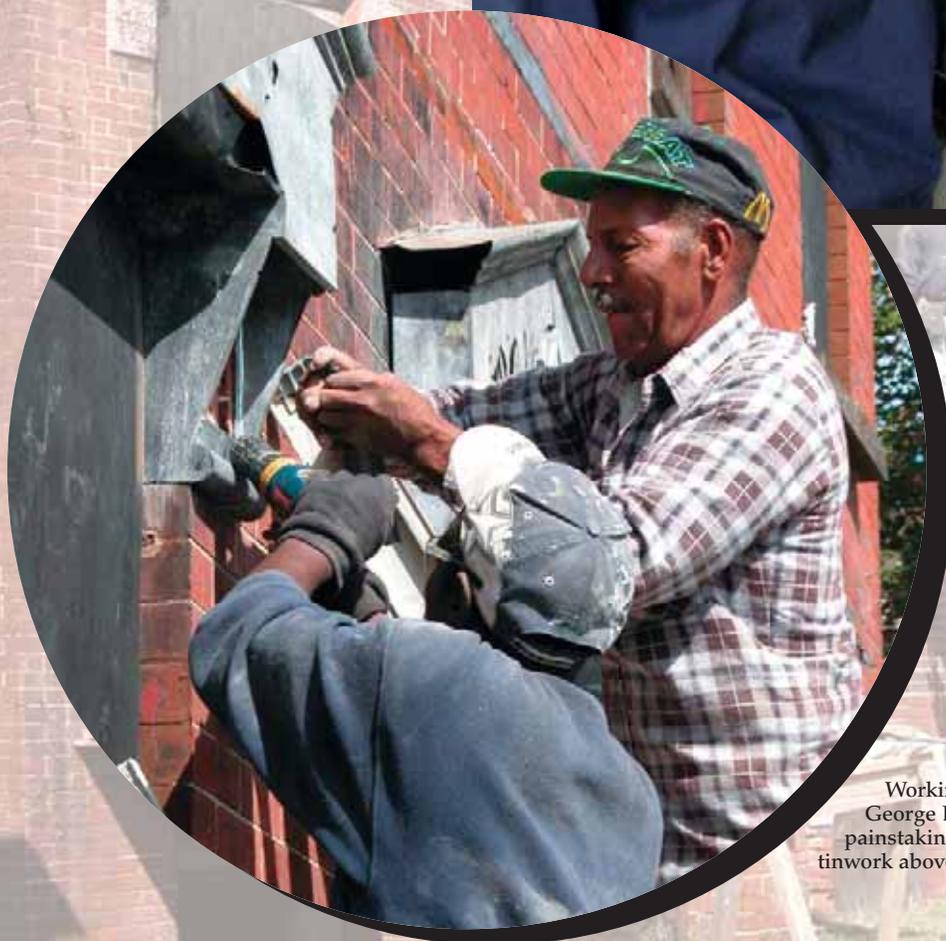
After surfing the Web, Joyce Proctor and Amos Richardson found information on Petersburg and realized the potential in the large number of historic

houses that could use their expertise. They moved from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and established their home restoration business, PR Renovations, Inc. In the last year, Proctor and Richardson have painstakingly transformed dilapidated row houses located across from the Appomattox Regional Governor’s School into modern townhomes with a historic flair. “We researched Petersburg on the Internet and could not believe the number of historic houses and the prices,” said Proctor. Recently acquiring a house on Adams Street, the couple plans to restore the row house and call Petersburg “home.”

We researched Petersburg on the Internet and could not believe the number of historic houses and the prices," said Proctor. Recently acquiring a house on Adams Street, the couple plans to restore the row house and call Petersburg "home."



Joyce Proctor and Amos Richardson, PR Renovations, Inc.



Working for PR Renovations, Inc., George Davis and James Roberts painstakingly restore the decorative tinwork above the doorways and windows.

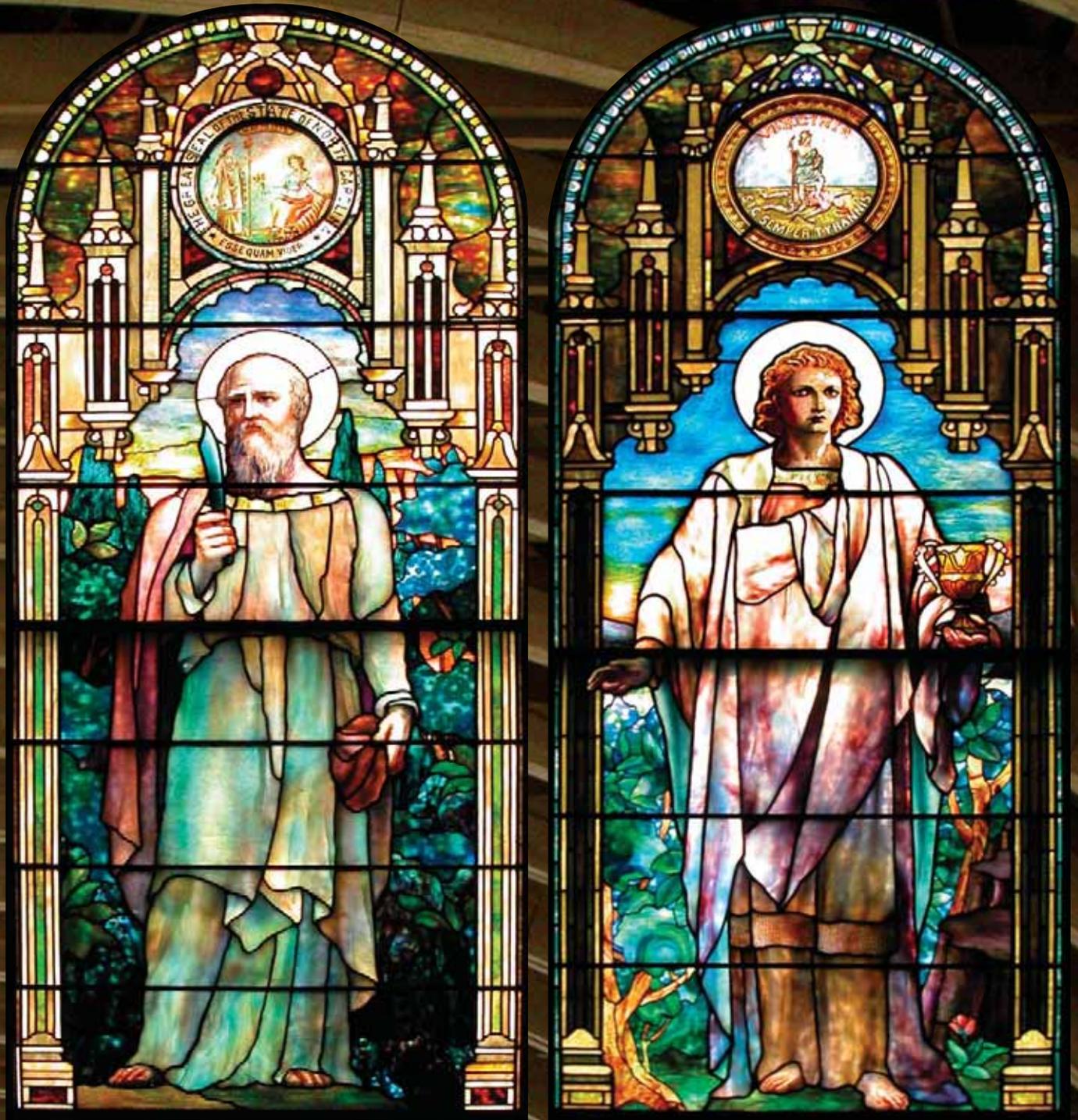
In Petersburg, city leaders, small business owners and average citizens are wearing a new pair of glasses as they look at the city's future.

Hidden Treasure

In Petersburg, city leaders, small business owners and average citizens are wearing a new pair of glasses as they look at the city's future. "Many people in Petersburg have no hope," says Daphne Reid. For this reason, people transplanted from other parts of the country and world are committed to bringing the light of hope to all of Petersburg's citizens.

Ironically, one of the country's greatest art treasures is tucked away in the heart of Petersburg. Built in 1735, Old Blandford Church is adorned with stained glass windows designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany in 1901. The 15 Tiffany windows were installed in the church from 1901 to 1912. Funds were raised for their design, manufacture and installation by the Ladies Memorial Association, an organization of Petersburg women founded in 1866. The windows stand as a monument to the more than 30,000 Civil War soldiers that are buried in the church's cemetery.

By today's standards, the value of the windows that Tiffany crafted cannot be calculated. Like Tiffany's work, the community development contributions of creative individuals in Petersburg are immeasurable. Just like the church with its glorious windows hidden from the masses, Petersburg and its citizens are precious gems waiting to be discovered. **MW**



The stained glass windows created by Louis Comfort Tiffany are among the many priceless treasures tucked away in Petersburg.

Hats Off to Petersburg

Whether you're in the market for a vintage 1920s flapper dress, a Sara Sue hat or a 1970s macramé necklace, Second Hand Rose in Old Towne Petersburg is just the place to find these unique items. Elegantly outfitted in a matching suit and hat, Second Hand Rose's owner, Gwen Cooper, gives the history of each garment as if they were on display in a museum. "This is not just a vintage clothing or consignment shop. It's a style museum," she says.

Cooper relocated to Petersburg from Charlottesville with her husband, Tony. By June 2002, they had renovated a home on Marshall Street and opened Second Hand Rose. An antiques dealer since 1991, Cooper owned a vintage clothing store in Charlottesville. "We decided to start a bed and breakfast and came to Petersburg after the suggestion of a friend." Instead of starting a bed and breakfast, Cooper saw the opportunity to market vintage clothing in Petersburg.

The word has spread quickly about Second Hand Rose. "People hear about Second Hand Rose through word of mouth, but I also have advertised in Virginia Living, Virginia Film Guide and a regional directory," says Cooper. She notes that one 87-year-old woman who was a former employee of Miller and Rhoads wanted to come to Second Hand Rose after reading in the local newspaper about her collection of Sara Sue hats. "She ended up donating things to the shop. This is not only a business, but the kind a place that people come to remember," she says.

Even though Cooper has several years experience as a small business owner, she still seeks the help of others. "I'm still learning," she says. "Networking has been a positive experience. The camaraderie is awesome. Everyone is willing to help each other. You just can't make it by yourself in business today."

In the future, she plans to move her business to a building (circa 1820) located on Bank Street that she recently purchased. Although the future site will be smaller than her present location, Cooper says, "I hope to revamp the store and make it more like a boutique." In addition, she plans to market her clothing and accessories over the Internet.

Cooper is a strong supporter of Petersburg and has hosted hat exhibits for local churches and the chamber of commerce. "There is nothing difficult about Petersburg. It is business as usual," she says. "You can't rely on others to make your business a success. I can't just say I wish the city would do this or that. I have to make it happen." In the same manner that she has surrounded herself by clothing styles from every era since the 1920s, Cooper also embraces Petersburg's diverse people and celebrates its unique style.

Gwen Cooper invites customers to step back in time and enjoy a memory from the past when they visit her shop, Second Hand Rose.

A Melodious Home in Petersburg



Brooks Bozman, Owner, Mercury String Shop

Nestled in the heart of Old Towne, Mercury String Shop tingles with the creative energy of its owner, Brooks Bozman. On the walls, violins hang gracefully awaiting the touch of young fingers. Wolfgang, a black lab, lies on the sofa in the front of the shop patiently waiting for a bow to glide across the cello's strings. On the workbench, a worn violin longs for Bozman to bring it back to life.

In business for only one year, Bozman has accomplished much as a first-time business owner. While working in a violin shop in Bethesda, MD, he endured a 25 percent cut in wages. "I decided I needed to set my sights higher. So, I decided that I would start a business," he said.

From December 2002 to June 2003, Bozman started marketing his services in Charlottesville, Norfolk, Richmond and Northern Virginia. "One of my students in Petersburg suggested that I consider the area. After Vandy Jones and Vicky Crump showed me around, I signed a lease on an apartment and building in Petersburg." Due to difficulty with his original lease, he rented another building from Dr. Lena Whitt and moved into his current location on July 1, 2003.

Although his gross sales receipts are up \$16,800 during the last business period, Bozman has overcome several challenges including a flooded building and startup financing. "I incurred \$33,000 worth of high-interest start-up debt," he said. However, he turned to Crater Small Business Development Center (CSBDC) for assistance. "I took a one-day course from the Small Business Administration on how to apply for a loan," he said. In addition, CSBDC has provided business counseling and assistance with his business plan.

Bozman also has developed a network of business people in the Petersburg area that are assisting him. "As a result of the network, people have recommended that I read books such as *Good to Great* and the *Portable MBA* that teach business concepts," he says. "I'm not trying to be an MBA. But when I talk to my CPA, I want to be able to understand terms like real profit margin and the cost of goods."

In the next couple of months, Bozman hopes to complete his business plan and obtain bank financing to pay off the high-interest debt. Boasting of his pioneer spirit, he tries to focus on the positive. "People are starting to get the word about Petersburg. The political climate is changing," Bozman says. "There are good investments here and tax credits for new businesses moving in. As long as people come here and seek customers from Petersburg and the surrounding area, they can make it."

Recognizing his challenges, Bozman is determined to make his business a success. He says, "My strength is the ability to create something out of nothing. My goal is to develop and maintain productive, long-term business relationships." With this in mind, he is forging ahead to a steady beat creating a harmonious future.

Ingenuity Solves Tough Housing Problems

The Petersburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (PRHA) also has harnessed the creativity of its citizens in its approach to developing affordable housing. Focusing on the housing needs of seniors, the PRHA has tapped into creativity of small business owners like Robert Jones. With extensive experience in historic restoration, Jones led the PRHA in developing Washington Columns to meet the housing needs of low-income senior citizens. Converting the former elementary school into 26 stylish apartments, Jones used the same determination that it took to rehabilitate the three historic homes that he owns in Petersburg. According to Jones, "We took an existing structure which had been vacated for 15 years. We put on a new roof since the building had been leaking for years." To complete the project, the PRHA implemented \$3.6 million in low income housing tax credits, \$900,000 in historic tax credits, \$40,000 in community development block grant money and \$400,000 in loan funds from the Virginia Housing and Development Authority.

In the future, the PRHA plans to convert the D.M. Brown School into additional apartments for the elderly. They also plan to decentralize low-income housing by replacing 50 apartments with 30 to 50 homes. To prevent displacement, the PRHA will build or purchase replacement housing in established neighborhoods.



To complete the project, the PRHA implemented \$3.6 million in low income housing tax credits, \$900,000 in historic tax credits, \$40,000 in community development block grant money and \$400,000 in loan funds from the Virginia Housing Development Authority.

Robert Jones,
Petersburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority



Rev. Michael Watts (*right*) of Petersburg Urban Ministries runs one of the largest YouthBuild programs in the country to assist high school dropouts with GED preparation. To gain marketable job skills, the students also construct homes for low-income families.

In addition to the PRHA's efforts, Petersburg Urban Ministries' leaders, Dwala Ferrell and Michael Watts, have relied on creative energy to solve both the housing and educational needs in Petersburg. Established in 1997, Ferrell and Watts operate one of the largest funded YouthBuild programs in the country. According to Ferrell, "We work with high school dropouts between the ages of 16 and 24. Seventy-five percent of the participants are from low-income households." Funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the program, which lasts from six to 18 months, focuses students on education and leadership development for 50 percent of the time.

During the remainder of the time, students rehabilitate or build homes for low-income individuals. "We help with job placement, GED preparation and internships," said Ferrell.

According to Ferrell, they have seen life-changing results. "One young man came to us after a long court history and incarceration. He was in his early 20s. He enrolled in the program, got his GED and completed a one-year internship. He got a job with a corporation and now supports both himself and his younger brother." Rehabbing houses all over the city, Ferrell and Watts gain satisfaction by seeing lives changed.

Dr. C. Theodore Koebel

Professor and Director, Center for Housing Research at Virginia Tech

by Cindy Elmore

1. What sparked your interest in housing research?

I was at Rutgers University as a doctoral student during the time that George Sternlieb ran the Center for Urban Policy Research. His work on the impact of demographic trends on housing markets and on the fundamental importance of market dynamics, particularly consumer demand, helped shape my initial interest in the topic. Then I joined the Urban Studies Center at the University of Louisville and spent the next 14 years in applied research addressing a wide variety of housing problems, from declining rural communities to central city neighborhoods.

2. Who if anyone has been your mentor?

I doubt that anyone would want to be tagged with that responsibility! But I've learned a lot from many different people over the years. I've learned more from people in the field, like Janaka Casper, and other directors of nonprofit housing corporations I've known and worked with, than probably anyone else. Don Krueckeberg at Rutgers introduced me to demography and regional economics. Doug Nunn, who was the former city affairs editor for the Courier Journal and the director of the Urban Studies Center at Louisville, taught me a lot about communicating research findings directly and clearly. Too often researchers and policy wonks hide their own confusion behind a string of large words that don't really mean anything.

3. What do you believe has been your greatest research project and why?

My greatest hits? Unfortunately my annual royalties don't buy much more than a six-pack of beer. My personal favorite is my work on nonprofit housing, where I've tried to provide a better conceptual and empirical understanding of the sector and its performance. Too much of the literature on nonprofit housing is promotional. Even though I've been heavily engaged in helping direct nonprofit housing corporations, I try to apply objective analysis to the sector.

4. What motivates you to continue your research efforts?

In a word, passion. I love what I do. I tell the following story to my students.

I somehow attribute the phrase 'God is in the details' to a

medieval craftsman who spent his life doing gargoyles for the tops of churches. Someone asked him why he had devoted so much attention, care and skill to something that no one would see except from a distance and thus his craftsmanship would go unnoticed. He replied 'God is in the details.'

Today that phrase has been converted to 'the Devil is in the details' due to the painful consequences of not paying enough attention to the details of computer programs, buildings or other contemporary products. The details, if ignored, will surely come back to cause you woe.

The inversion of the phrase is not a sign of our agnostic culture, but really is a restatement of the same principle. If you don't find God in the details, you will find the Devil. And how can you find God in the details?

Passion. Whatever your major or your future career, you must be passionate about what you do. If you have no passion, you cannot be committed to the long hours of struggle that the details always require. And if you cannot be passionate, you will never be inspired. If you aren't passionate about what you are doing, find something else to do. If you ever discover that you are completely annoyed by the minutiae of your responsibilities, find something else to do. If you find you have no desire to be inspired, find something else to do. Only passion can sustain you in doing well.

And when you learn what it is to be passionate about something — to care so deeply about it that you find the energy to master its details and become energized by the discovery and mastery of those details — you will also learn to respect others with passion, whatever their calling.

My father was a meat cutter and taught me the trade. I would not have been a success in the meat business. What I've since learned is that my father found God in the details of running a small business, as I find God in the details of teaching and research. The need to master the details is the same in any pursuit, whether meat cutting or teaching.

Stations in life vary. Some of you will be blessed with high social status and income. Others will not. I wish you success not in those terms, but in finding God in whatever details you pursue and in recognizing your common bond with others who find God in their details, whether janitors or CEOs. And whenever the Devil finds you

When you learn what it is to be passionate about something — to care so deeply about it that you find the energy to master its details and become energized by the discovery and mastery of those details — you will also learn to respect others with passion, whatever their calling.

because you ignored those details, remember me and laugh a little.

5. What do you believe is the greatest challenge facing community development practitioners, today as they search for ways to provide affordable housing?

Building good quality communities of choice. Too many low-income communities are communities of capture and not communities of choice. We need to find a way to create affordable communities, particularly affordable rental communities of reasonable density, that help establish community norms that enhance the quality of life. We're afraid of talking about norms, but we need norms to establish our obligations to each other. We need to find ways to create community associations at the apartment complex level that establish a social contract specifying the norms governing residents and owners. I'd like to see low-income communities that are launch pads into stable ownership of a true asset.

6. What can community development organizations do to better assist in their efforts to acquire and maintain affordable housing?

The first order of business is becoming good at the business. Community development organizations are small firms. They need to be efficiently managed and they need to be highly skilled in property development and management. The second order is capital, which requires adequate government and foundation support and a mix of incomes among residents that will support the maintenance of good quality housing. The third is the heart and brains to challenge our residents and ourselves to create good quality communities. We cannot expect government to solve the problem with money, although money always helps. But it won't solve the problem.

7. How do you envision the affordable housing market 10 years from now?

I don't have a utopian vision. I fear that we're eliminating housing from the social safety net, which had gapping holes in it anyway. I think we'll always have a mix of good and bad "affordable" housing, or communities of choice and communities of capture. The mix is



much too heavily weighted toward communities of capture. My hope is that what we are learning now in creating communities of choice would help us shift the balance. That will require performance, capital and jobs. The nonprofit sector has to deliver and document performance — in terms of property development, property management, fiscal management and quality of life. Others need to deliver capital, including Congress. And the economy has to produce sufficient jobs for our residents. **MW**

Conley Salyer, Director,
West Virginia Small Business
Development Center

Satisfaction Guaranteed

by Cindy Elmore



After scribbling a list of her abilities and the names of potential clients on a napkin in a local restaurant, Kathleen DuBois decided to start her own marketing firm. Beth Thornton launched her engineering firm after a discussion with a colleague in the ladies room of the Marriott. When Richard Shell was laid off after 20 years of service with Nisource (Columbia Gas), he searched the Internet tirelessly before finding the right franchise option. Introduced by mutual friends, Jim Bostic and Denver McMillion quickly connected, built a high level of trust and combined their diverse professional backgrounds to form a manufacturing company. Although these entrepreneurs took different routes in starting their new businesses in West Virginia, all of them turned to the West Virginia Small Business Development Center (WVSBDC) for the technical assistance to make their dreams become a reality.

Directed by Conley Salyer since 2001, the WVSBDC comprises 12 satellite offices on the campuses of community and technical colleges and two located at Region One Workforce Investment Board. As a lawyer with expertise in tax law, economic development and government procurement, Salyer also relies on his own experience as a small business owner to keep the WVSBDC focused on serving its customers, running efficiently and constantly measuring success. "As an organization, we learned how to measure, how to improve and how to take risks," Salyer said.

To achieve these goals, Salyer submitted his organization to the rigors of registration under the ISO 9001:2000 Quality Standard. (See sidebar on page 29) Partially funded by the Small Business Administration (SBA), the WVSBDC was already required to undergo government audits of its program performance. Salyer believed that the WVSBDC needed something more to deliver quality programs. "We needed a crash course in quality performance," he said. To assist with the efforts, the WVSBDC hired the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing to lead the agency through the ISO implementation strategy. "We took it to the next level by using outside auditors. We did not exempt our finances nor our advisory board from procedural review," said Salyer. The ISO 9001:2000 Quality Standard training helped the WVSBDC develop a quality management system to achieve customer satisfaction and continual improvement. Although submitting his organization to ISO was stressful for the staff, Salyer believed it was necessary. "It was a judgment call. We needed to do it and do it now."

In addition to the ISO Quality Standard training, Salyer instituted a major change in the WVSBDC by bringing all the centers' professional staffs under one umbrella. In the past, the centers' staffs reported directly to the colleges where they were located. According to Salyer, "Uniting the small business development center personnel created one regional workforce." Aligning the centers resulted in improved job performance, the availability of on-line client coordination and better use of college resources. The colleges also agreed to provide



***"As an organization,
we learned how to measure,
how to improve
and how to take risks."***

Conley Salyer



Kevin Twohig, Ombudsman
State of West Virginia

office space, support staff and a travel budget for WWSBDC personnel. In exchange, WWSBDC staff members provide host colleges with economic development tools — an important part of the hosts' missions. Many staff members also serve as adjunct faculty for the host colleges.

Governor Bob Wise created the Ombudsman Program in March 2003 to assist small businesses with regulatory issues. As a mediator between small business owners and regulatory agencies, Kevin Twohig, the state's ombudsman, works to provide satisfaction for both parties. "When small business owners contact me by telephone or e-mail, it allows me to get an understanding of what they have to say. Then, we work with the agency. That works well for everyone involved."

A small business owner with a background in economics, Twohig empathizes with business

"Working as a business counselor with the WWSBDC since 2000... I enjoy helping people. That's the best part of the job."

Kevin Twohig

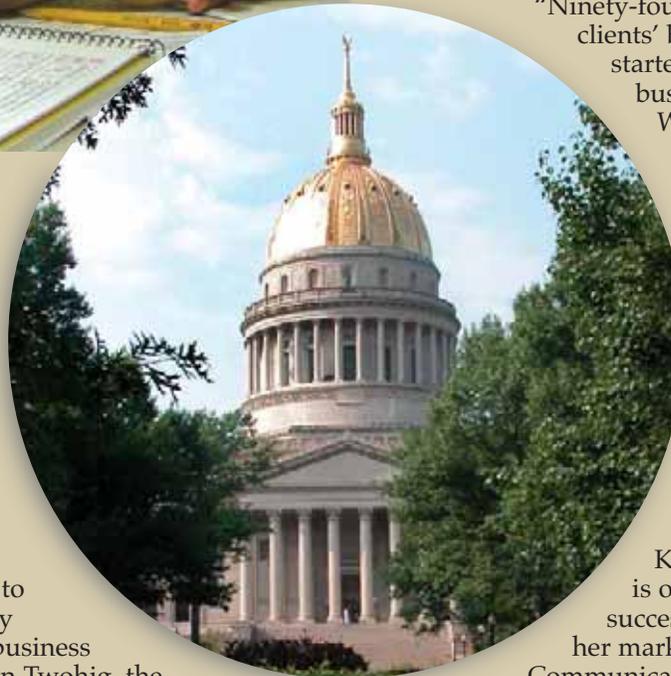
owners, but understands the regulatory requirements. "I understand that regulations are a necessity, but try not to overburden small businesses with them." Working as a business counselor with the WWSBDC since 2000, Twohig adds, "I enjoy helping people. That's the best part of the job."

Watching Small Businesses Bloom

Twohig and the other small business development counselors throughout West Virginia assist small businesses every day. Whether it's helping business owners through licensing procedures or writing business plans, the counselors work diligently to put the right people in business and keep them there.

"Ninety-four percent of our clients' businesses that were started in 2002 were still in business two years later.

We help people to know if they should go into business," says Salyer. Conducting workshops on business structuring and licensing procedures, WWSBDC counselors also provide business advice on marketing, cash flow and pricing.



Kathleen DuBois is one of Twohig's success stories, starting her marketing firm, DaisySeed Communications, Inc., three years ago.

After the first year in business, DuBois found her lifeline at the WWSBDC while watching a Charleston, West Virginia-based television show. "I saw people from the SBDC being interviewed and it seemed as if they were speaking directly to me. I called them up and scheduled an appointment," she explained. Although DuBois had over 10 years of experience in marketing and fundraising, she still

Kathleen DuBois, President
DaisySeed Communications, Inc. and
Progressity Development Solutions

needed Twohig's small business expertise. "Kevin was like a savior to me. He helped to validate my path," she said. "He was a wealth of information and helped me to refine our business plan."

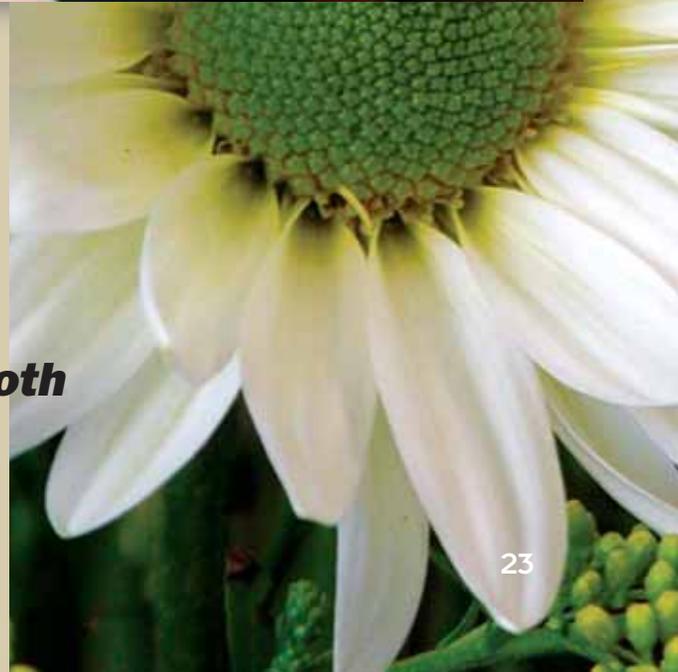
With Twohig's assistance, DuBois has created a second consulting firm, Progressity Development Solutions, which provides fundraising consulting services to nonprofit organizations and academic institutions. She became a certified fundraising executive in June 2003 and her nonprofit client roster includes West Virginia University Institute of Technology, Leadership West Virginia, ABLE Families, West Virginia Public Broadcasting and Roane General Hospital Foundation. DaisySeed Communications recently received an honorable mention award from the U.S. Department of Justice for a campaign they developed to reduce and prevent gun violence, entitled, "Hard Time for Gun Crime." Although DuBois seems to have overcome the struggles that many new businesses face, she says, "By surrounding myself with a core group of business experts, I can ensure top quality service to both DaisySeed and Progressity clients. That's where a person like Kevin helps me."

Working out of the Charleston Enterprise Center, DuBois has hired a full-time administrative assistant and plans to expand her consulting staff in the near future. To celebrate her business success, she receives a visit from the florist once a month. "I always said that once I knew my business was secure, I would have daisies delivered to our office once a month and that's what we do."



"By surrounding myself with a core group of business experts, I can ensure top quality service to both DaisySeed and Progressity clients."

Kathleen DuBois





Richard Shell, Proprietor
Budget Blinds

On the Road to Business Success

Facing many difficulties with a positive outlook has been the secret to success for Richard Shell and his Budget Blinds franchise in Hurricane, West Virginia. "I always had a fire in my belly to do something," exclaimed Shell. The opportunity came after a job displacement. "I began searching the Internet for franchise opportunities and found Budget Blinds."

After discovering a franchise that would combine his love of helping people with his home improvement experience, Shell sought help from a number of sources. First, he turned to the WORKFORCE West Virginia Center in Hurricane. At their recommendation, he

"I always had a fire in my belly to do something... the opportunity came after a job displacement."

Richard Shell

attended a business planning seminar at Unlimited Future, Inc. (UFI). Ultimately, UFI referred Shell to Amber Wilson and Edna McClain, business analyst and center manager, respectively for the Marshall Community & Technical College SBDC in Huntington. Working with McClain and Wilson, he received financial advice and business assistance. "They looked over my financial documents and helped with a business plan," explained Shell. Faced with financing challenges, McClain directed Shell to Lightstone Community Development Corporation. "Conventional financing was not available to me. I worked with the Lightstone CDC and received a \$35,000 loan through their SBA microloan program," he said. In addition, Wilson assisted Shell with obtaining a \$15,000 UFI-WVSBDC microloan.

Together, the team at the Marshall Community & Technical College SBDC helped jumpstart Shell's business. Working out of his van, Shell offers custom window treatments such as draperies, fabric blinds, valances, wood blinds and shutters. His enthusiasm for his products quickly spreads to his customers. "I saw one of Richard's yard signs and looked at one of my neighbor's blinds that Richard had installed. I called and Richard gave good pricing, much

better than JC Penney's," says Joyce Cumpston, one of Shell's customers. People like Cumpston are what motivate Shell. "I love what I'm doing. It's not the same drudgery. People are what make me go," he says.

With a realtor referral program, door-to-door canvassing and promotional signs, Budget Blinds has grown quickly. In fact, Shell has hired an installer who will become his business partner. With an MBA and a solid business background, Shell says, "I am focusing on my strengths like advertising, marketing and sales." Since he owns the only Budget Blinds franchise in West Virginia, he hopes to increase his territory and conduct his operations from a central location. For now, the



Beth Thornton, President
Thornton Engineering

delight in the eyes of customers like Cumpston proves that Shell is on the road to business success.

Engineering a Way to Have It All

Beth Thornton drew on all her resources to start a business that would allow her flexibility and keep her close to her two young children. Although Thornton had a degree in civil engineering and several years of experience in the field, funding for her engineering firm was the biggest challenge.

During a lunch break Internet search, Thornton found the answer: the SBDC in Huntington and business counselor McClain. Excited about Thornton's business idea, McClain assisted her with writing a business plan and seeking funding. "I needed money and I needed it now. I told the bank, 'I won't pay it back until next year.'" With guidance from McClain on the appropriate amount to borrow, Thornton received an SBA-guaranteed loan of \$45,000 through United Bank. "Edna helped me with the strategies. She knew how much money that I needed for the first year," explained Thornton.

Starting Thornton Engineering in Milton, West Virginia, she began working out of the third floor of her home in 2002. In January 2004, she purchased a house, renovated it for her business and hired two employees. She even marketed her new firm by delivering freshly baked cookies to potential customers.

Certified as a disadvantaged business entity (DBE), Thornton bids on contract work for the West Virginia Division of Highways. (DBEs are woman-owned or minority-owned businesses, certified as such by the Division of Highways, Department of Transportation. Because states receive federal highway funding, their purchasing systems must contain "goals" for purchasing from DBEs.) "DBE gets my foot in the door, but my abilities will keep me in business." She said obtaining a DBE classification was one of the business hurdles she had to face. "DBE is more intense than buying a house or being audited by the IRS," she said.

Looking back over the last few years, Thornton says, "The biggest mistake that I made was not going to the SBDC sooner." Right now, she is looking ahead at 34 miles of highway signs to design and the priceless opportunity to work at home and be with her children.

Looking back over the last few years, Thornton says, "The biggest mistake that I made was not going to the SBDC sooner."



Jeff McMillion, Vice President of Operations
West Virginia Metal Wholesalers, Inc.
and son of Owner Denver McMillion

Rolling Out a New Business Venture

Driving down a gravel road through a yellow fence past a flock of turkeys, the last thing you'd expect to see at the end of a winding road in Muddlety, West Virginia is a sheet metal manufacturing company. Five miles back at the service station, people know that Muddlety has a new business: West Virginia Metal Wholesalers.

Just four years ago, Jim Bostic and Denver McMillion had not even conceived the idea of West Virginia Metal Wholesalers, a metal roofing and siding manufacturer. After the two men were introduced by friends, Bostic and McMillion realized that their backgrounds meshed and started toying with the idea of starting a business together. Bostic already owned a small business, Roll Form Tech, Ltd., which employed 17 people. In the late 1970s, he also managed a trucking company with 120 employees. Complementing Bostic's experience, McMillion possessed 27 years of experience in marketing and selling building materials. Together, the two men identified the opportunity for manufacturing coated metal roofing and siding using roll form technology. They realized that tighter Environmental Protection Agency regulations for shingle disposal had increased demand for metal roofing. They saw a distinct advantage as the only distributor of 100-year metal roofs in West Virginia.

They realized that tighter Environmental Protection Agency regulations for shingle disposal had increased demand for metal roofing. They saw a distinct advantage as the only distributor of 100-year metal roofs in West Virginia.





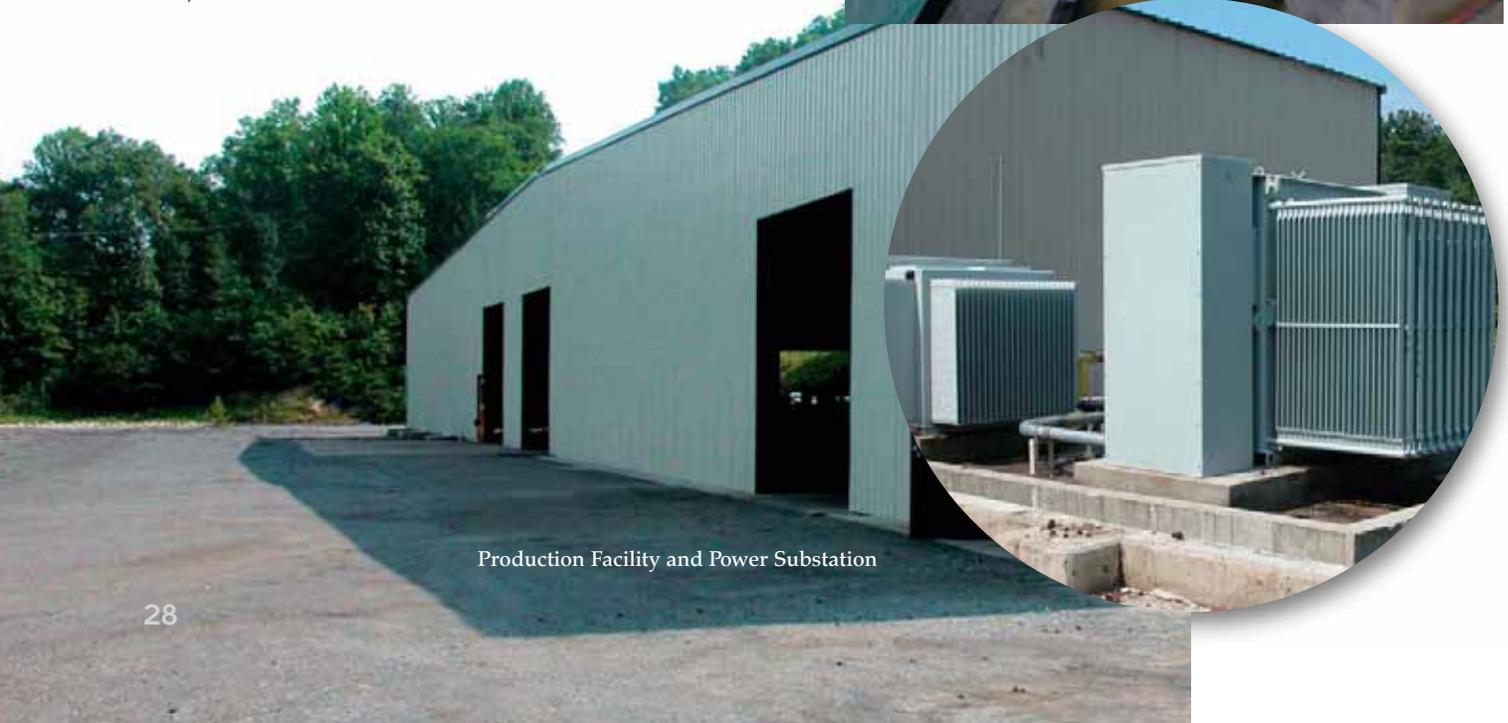
Jim Bostic, President
West Virginia Metal Wholesalers, Inc.



After obtaining the location, Bostic and McMillion constructed a manufacturing facility from the same type of sheet metal that the company will produce.

Even though Bostic and McMillion had a great business concept, they still needed assistance in funding the \$1.1 million project. "Financing was the greatest obstacle," said Bostic. Well-known for their business successes, the two men approached Paul Cook at the Fairmont Regional Small Business Development Center in Flatwoods (Flatwoods SBDC). According to Bostic, "I already knew Paul Cook and worked closely with him. I knew what I wanted and worked in conjunction with Paul to do the business plan." After completing the business plan, Bostic and McMillion approached banks for financing. "You have to sell yourself to the banks. I do what I say and it shows through," explained Bostic.

Securing financing from the Fifth Third Bank and the West Virginia Economic Development Authority, Bostic and McMillion worked closely with the local 4-C Economic Development Authority and the Flatwoods SBDC to secure the property in Muddlety. After obtaining the location, Bostic and McMillion constructed a manufacturing facility from the same type of sheet metal that the company will produce. "We even used the same doors, trims and fasteners in the building that we will distribute to wholesalers within a 700-mile radius," said Bostic. With five employees, the company projects employing 32 to 35 workers by the end of the fourth business year. Driving every day from Spencer, Bostic is even musing about making Muddlety home, "I might buy some land on the other side of the mountain, build a house and settle here."



Production Facility and Power Substation

ISO Ensures Quality

From the size of bank cards to freight containers, ISO (International Organization for Standardization) sets the standards. Since “International Organization for Standardization” would have different abbreviations in different languages, its name is derived from a Greek word, “isos,” meaning equal. As a non-governmental organization, ISO is the world’s largest developer of standards. As a bridging organization, ISO develops a consensus between the requirements of business and the broader needs of consumers and users.

International standardization began in the electrotechnical field: the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) was established in 1906. Pioneering work in other fields was carried out by the International Federation of the National Standardizing Associations (ISA), which was set up in 1926. The emphasis within ISA was laid heavily on mechanical engineering. ISA’s activities ended in 1942.

In 1946, delegates from 25 countries met in London and decided to create a new international organization, of which the object would be “to facilitate the international coordination and unification of industrial standards.” The new organization, ISO, officially began operations on February 23, 1947.

ISO standards are voluntary. As a non-governmental organization, ISO has no legal authority to enforce their implementation. A certain percentage of ISO standards — mainly those concerned with health, safety or the environment — has been adopted in some countries as part of their regulatory framework. However, although ISO standards are voluntary, they may become a market requirement, which has happened in the case of the dimensions of freight containers and bank cards.

The ISO 9000 family is among ISO’s most widely known and successful standards. ISO 9000 has become an international reference for quality requirements in business-to-business dealings. The vast majority of ISO standards are highly specific to a particular product, material or process. However, the standards that have earned the ISO 9000 family a worldwide reputation is known as “generic management system standards.” “Generic” means that the same standards can be applied to any organization, large or small, whatever its product — including whether its “product” is actually a service — in any sector of activity, and whether it is a business enterprise, a public administration, or a government department. “Management system” refers to what the organization does to manage its processes, or activities. Generic also signifies that no matter what the organization is or does, if it wants to establish a quality management system or an environmental management system, then such a system has a number of essential features that are spelled out in the relevant standards of the ISO 9000 family.

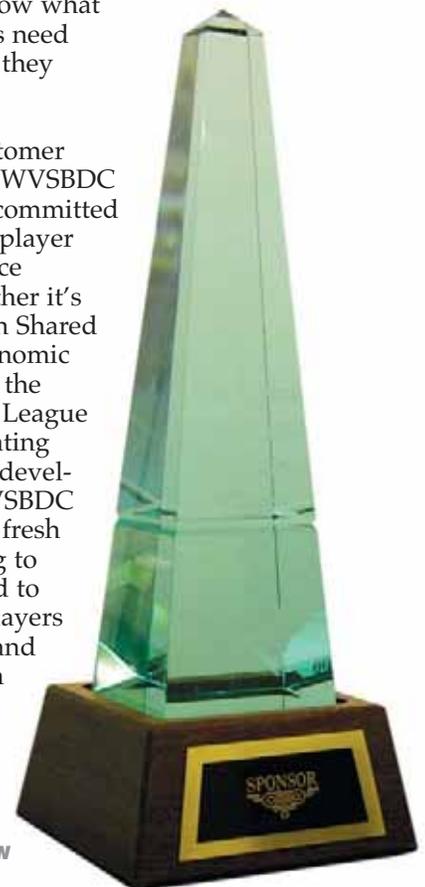
For more information about ISO, visit: www.ISO.org.



Teamwork Produces Customer Satisfaction

At Salyer’s desk in Charleston, the wheels are constantly turning. He speaks of quantitatively measuring the success of the WWSBDC. “Before any activity, we always ask, ‘What are the metrics?’ ‘How will we know if we succeed?’” Focusing on customer satisfaction, the WWSBDC constantly develops new ways to know what small businesses need and makes sure they are well served.

As a part of customer satisfaction, the WWSBDC organization is committed to being a team player with other service providers. Whether it’s the state’s Vision Shared approach to economic development or the Entrepreneurial League System for initiating entrepreneurial development, the WWSBDC is supportive of fresh ideas. According to Salyer, “We need to be good team players to assist others and not always push our agenda. We need to be a cheerleader for small business development in the state.” MW



Losing Ground in the Best of Times: Low Income Renters in the 1990s:

This report prepared for the National Low Income Housing Coalition by Drs. Kathryn P. Nelson and Danilo Pelletiere, and Mark Treskon analyzes U.S. Census data on the housing situation of low-income renter households from 1990 and 2000. The report finds that despite improved income and housing conditions for Americans across a wide range of income levels in the 1990s, housing problems became more concentrated among the lowest-income renter households and their access to affordable rental units declined. Among the findings of the report:

- Over the decade, severe rent burdens declined nationally for low-income renter households, but in many states, severe rent burdens for extremely low-income renter households increased even as incomes grew.
- Three fourths of extremely low-income renter households had at least one housing problem in 2000, and 56 percent paid more than half of their income for rent — the definition of severe housing cost burden.
- State level shortages of affordable housing available to extremely low-income renter households grew by 15 percent from 1990 to 2000.
- In 2000, the 50 states needed at least an additional 4.9 million rental units, both affordable and available, to the lowest-income renter households.

The full report is available at:
www.nlihc.org/research/losingground.pdf.

RESEARCHER'S CORNER



Credit, Capital and Communities: The Implications of the Changing Mortgage Banking Industry for Community Based Organizations

Lacking the skills and information needed to shop for the best mortgage products available in the market place, many low-income and low-wealth homebuyers and mortgage borrowers are saddled with high-cost mortgage debt. Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies produced this 18-month study, which documents changes in the mortgage industry structure, the rise in higher-cost subprime lending and the existence of a dual market structure. Some principle findings include that mortgage brokers are most prevalent in the subprime market and community loan programs face stiff competition from aggressively marketed, higher-cost subprime mortgage products.

The complete text of the report is available online at the Joint Center for Housing Studies website at: www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/communitydevelopment/cc04-1.pdf.

Incubation in Evolution: Strategies and Lessons Learned in Four Countries



The National Business Incubation Association (NBIA) has released this study, the first title in its International Reading series. Originally published in French, the report compares and contrasts business incubation programs in France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. Co-authors Philippe Albert, Michel Bernasconi and Lynda Gaynor conducted the study that led to the publications. Utilizing qualitative and descriptive analysis, *Incubation in Evolution* examines business incubation in four countries, including the emergence of the industry; characteristics of successful incubators; descriptions of academic, scientific and corporate incubators; and key industry trends.

For more information or to purchase *Incubation in Evolution: Strategies and Lessons Learned in Four Countries*, contact NBIA, 20 E. Circle Drive #37198, Athens, Ohio 45701-3571; telephone: (740) 593-4331; fax: (740) 593-1966; or visit NBIA's online bookstore at: www.nbia.org/bookstore. MW

Revisiting the Past...



to Renew a Vision

by Michele Bell



As the first commercial corridor in Washington DC, 8th Street's strong connection with military history tells a vivid story of bustling commerce in the 1800s. In 1799, the Navy Yard site was picked because of its location as a natural harbor of the Anacostia River. Two years later Thomas Jefferson settled troops within marching distance of the Capitol in the Marine Barracks at 8th and I streets.

"Barracks Row" remained a vibrant center of commerce for many years through shipbuilding and ordnance production. But the end of World War II brought a loss of Navy Yard jobs that resulted in many businesses around the base closing. Racial tensions in the 1960s sparked an out-migration of the middle-class, which caused the District to lose a good portion of its tax base. Vacant houses and boarded-up commercial buildings became a haven for crime. Moreover, much of the areas public housing was built in parcels adjacent to the corridor adding to the impression of blight.

Now Barracks Row can boast of neighborhood revitalization that encompasses thriving businesses, cultural attractions, and safer and cleaner streets thanks to committed leadership, creative partnerships and a strategic approach to bringing Barracks Row back to its former glory. The revitalization effort has been ongoing for 15 years and continues to evolve.

Charting the Course

In response to the neighborhood degradation, merchants on 8th Street created the Barracks Row Business Alliance in the early 1990s. Margot Kelly, who became its president, strongly believed that Barracks Row would rise again as a bustling economic center where people could feel safe visiting and shopping. Despite the economic and social despair of the area, Kelly purchased and revitalized her first building at 719 8th Street, SE, utilizing the historic tax credit program. "It's all about partnership, partnership, partnership and in the beginning, I had none," said Kelly.

She advocated removing businesses that attracted unsavory clientele and rallied existing businesses to help her form the Barracks Row Business Alliance. Kelly wanted to preserve and restore the architecturally rich



Margot Kelly

history of the area and change negative perceptions. "We solicited the help of the police to increase their presence by walking and cycling through the area," she said. "You would be amazed at how their sheer presence caused a significant drop in crime in the area. We began to see the positive indicators of change when doctors and lawyers began to buy and restore buildings and when the Shakespeare Theater moved into the area anchoring the 500 block of 8th Street. The area was on the cusp of a Renaissance."

Destined To Be A Main Street Program

Consequently Kelly learned about a program developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation which had helped to revitalize hundreds of historic business districts nationwide. The approach empowers people, organizations and communities to achieve ongoing downtown and neighborhood district revitalization based upon the principles of self-determination, resource conservation and incremental transformation represented through the Trust's comprehensive Main Street approach.

"It's all about partnership, partnership, partnership."

Margot Kelly



George A. Didden III chairman of the board and chief executive officer of National Capital Bank, played an instrumental role in bringing attention to the economic needs of Barracks Row.

The group embraced the idea and decided to adopt a Main Street model. The program's four-pronged approach consists of developing volunteer committees to address four components simultaneously: design, promotion, organization and economic revitalization. Kelly was proud of the progress that had been made but turned over the reigns of her program to Linda Parke-Gallagher, a community resident who ran her own public policy business, and had been active with the group to get the Main Street program going. Gallagher recruited George Didden III, chief executive officer at National Capital Bank of Washington to co-chair what would become, "Barracks Row Main Street." The group incorporated as the Barracks Row Main Street (BRMS) in 1999, after forming its own board of directors and adopting bylaws and the organizing structure recommended by the National Main Street program.

Alliances

The Barracks Row Main Street has close ties with the Capitol Hill Business Improvement District, the Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals (CHAMPS), the Barracks Row Business Alliance and the District of Columbia to provide a safer and cleaner environment that is amenable and attractive to shoppers. Today, many of the area merchants are members of CHAMPS, a community business organization that promotes and develops business and professional activity on Capitol Hill. *For more information, contact Rob Gabany, executive director, at (202) 547-7788.*

Gospel Rescue Ministries

Gospel Rescue Ministries (GRM) operates one of Washington DC's largest shelters for serving the homeless. Affiliated with the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, the organization provides lodging facilities for homeless, emergency food and shelter, youth and family services, rehabilitation programs for the addicted, education and job training programs, and assistance to the elderly poor and at-risk youth. *For more information, contact John Jackson, executive director, at (202) 842-1731 or visit www.grm.org and www.agrm.org.*



The program's four-pronged approach consists of developing volunteer committees to address four components simultaneously: design, promotion, organization and economic revitalization.



Linda Gallagher, co-chair and president of Barracks Row Main Street, takes pride in the improvements made in DC's first commercial corridor.

At the time, the District of Columbia did not have a government-sponsored Main Street Program as do many states. With no government funds available, the group set out to obtain private grants from individuals and foundations. Early funders were the Fannie Mae Foundation, Arcana Foundation, and The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation.

BRMS raised enough funds to open a small office on 8th Street and hire an executive director. Jill Dowling served as executive director from 2000-2002, until Bill McLeod, a member of the staff at the National Trust's Main Street Office took over. Funding for a \$7.5 million streetscape rehabilitation from the District Department of Transportation was extremely successful. The design was a model of public-private cooperation and smart urban design for an environmentally sensitive landscape plan that included a comprehensive traffic and pedestrian study as well as other design features, such as Low Impact Development.

Formation of the Capitol Hill Business Improvement District (BID)

Organizers of BRMS recognized that successful revitalization is sustained by strength, support and collaboration. Concurrently with the development of BRMS, the Capitol Hill Business Improvement District (Capitol Hill BID) was formed as an outgrowth of the Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals (CHAMPS) Economic Development Committee.

Traditionally, a BID is an organization of property owners in a commercial district who agree to be taxed an additional amount to fund neighborhood improvements. Once a BID is formed the annual assessment is mandatory and collected by the city like any other tax. But unlike other taxation, the city returns the assessment to BID management for use in the specified district.





Barracks Row's success is a team effort of the public and private sectors. Paul Swails, Ready, Willing, & Able; Bill McLeod, executive director of Barracks Row Main Street; John Imparato of the Navy Yard; Phyllis Barnes of BRMS; Major Dave McSorley, Marine Barracks, DC, USMC; Gallagher; Admiral Jan Gaudio; George Didden; Patty Brosmer, executive director of the Capitol Hill BID; and Dominic McKisset.

The organizers included Susan Perry, chairman of the BID campaign committee; George Didden; Patty Brosmer, executive director of Capitol Hill BID; Ken Jarobe, advisory neighborhood commissioner; and other members affiliated with BRMS strategized that the two structures could leverage the strengths of funding and partnerships. In return for increased taxes, the BID provides enhanced services that are designed to augment, but not replace what the government provides. These supplementary services include: security, street cleaning, maintenance and graffiti removal, streetscape improvements, marketing and promotional services, and community outreach. These "clean and safe" services were exactly what the newly refurbished Barracks Row district needed to change the public perception of it to an attractive shopping and dining destination.

In spite of a BID's positive objectives, it was not easy to establish. Generally, absentee property owners argued against collecting extra taxes for enhanced services that they felt the city should already be providing. In addition,

the area around Capitol Hill has smaller commercial buildings when compared to other BIDs in the District of Columbia. Therefore when fees are based on square footage, Capitol Hill BID fees are generally less than in other BIDs in the District. To overcome this issue, the Capitol Hill BID selected an assessed value method of taxation because per square footage would produce far less than what would be needed to operate a BID. There are also a smaller number of commercial properties in the Capitol Hill BID and many of the properties in the area are tax exempt since they are nonprofits. After much hard work, the Capitol Hill BID was voted in by a 51 percent majority of business owners located in the proposed Capitol Hill BID in 2002 and was operational by May 2003. The Capitol Hill BID is now one of four BIDs in DC.

Capitol Hill BID shoppers are rediscovering the pleasures of strolling in the city, and property values have risen. As a result of partnerships with Ready, Willing, & Able and Gospel Rescue Ministries, the Capitol Hill BID

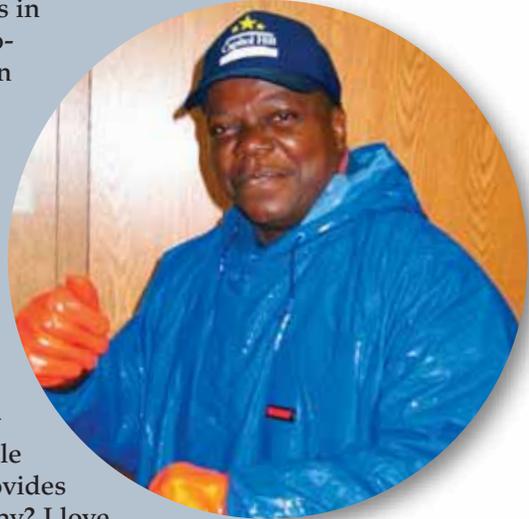
(continued on page 38)

"It's all about partnership, partnership, partnership."

Ready, Willing & Able

Ready, Willing & Able is a program of the Doe Fund, a New York-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to help formerly homeless men achieve lives of independence and self-sufficiency. As a holistic, residential, work and job skills training program, it empowers, employs and supports homeless individuals in their efforts to become self-sufficient. The program provides a structured environment in which homeless men and women can restore their self-esteem and regain power over their lives.

Ready, Willing & Able has helped hundreds of people become drug-free, secure full-time employment and obtain housing. Leroy Williams, a former homeless man, is now an ambassador in the area. "Ready, Willing & Able changed my life," said Williams. Through the program, he completed drug rehabilitation, acquired job training and secured employment. "They gave me more than just a job, they gave me hope," said Williams. The program helps people develop a work ethic, encourages them to save and provides them with meals and a place to stay. "What else can I say? I love the program; I love my job and I love people. Thank God for the blessing of Ready, Willing & Able," said Williams, who aspires to become a comedian and a musician. *For more information, contact Jennifer Mitchell at (202)248-7303, or visit the web at www.doe.org.*



Leroy Williams



Dominic McKisset and Paul Swails

Marty Carroll, manager
Finn MacCool's Bar

has done an effective job of dispelling the area's negative image of panhandlers and the homeless by partnering with organizations to hire area homeless in uniformed street cleaning positions. In addition to the street cleaning job placement program, those who qualify may work at the business establishments. BID supporters understand that simple things — such as keeping sidewalks clean and safe — matter enormously to the urban quality of life.

The District Plan

DC has also fostered development by putting together a team of city officials to develop a targeted approach to address the expansion and attraction of small businesses in neighborhoods. In an overall effort to strengthen neighborhoods and existing businesses and to attract new retail, the District developed a targeted neighborhood investment program called ReSTORE DC. The DC Main Street program was established three years after BRMS and is based on the proven model for the National Main Street program developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. There are currently 12 DC Main Street programs.

The ReSTORE DC Program Offers:

- A Commercial District Technical Assistance Program to provide technical and advisory services for revitalization projects;
- A Commercial Property Acquisition and Development Fund that provides matching funds to nonprofits to acquire, redevelop or build commercial properties; and
- A Small Business Development Program that helps businesses grow and prosper by providing access to capital and various training and technical assistance.

There are also a host of programs offered by the District and federal government that businesses on the Hill can tap into. The city has not adopted performance measures to evaluate the success of the BIDs and the Main Street programs, but officials expect to see the kind of vitality in each endeavor that BRMS has achieved. In the future BIDs and Main Street programs will be evaluated based on the creation of businesses, jobs, retail sales, reinvestment in infill development and the leveraging of private investments. The area has many

(continued on page 40)

Customers renewed interest in the Barracks Row is to the sheer delight of the area's retailers.

It's all about partnership, partnership, partnership



Francisco Pliegro (left) of Alvear Studios and Chris Alvear, Owner

Business Is Good

Chris Alvear, owner of Alvear Studios, moved to Barracks Row when he began to see the remarkable changes occurring on 8th Street. He knew it was where his studio of unique home accessories, jewelry and art belonged. Alvear sees the potential for boutiques, antiques shops and unique retail to locate in the area. Alvear financed his business using his own personal funds. "The easy part is having the dream, but living it is the difficult part," he said. Alvear would like to see Barracks Row expand its resource center that would help businesses succeed by teaching how to market and develop business plans, and collaborating on health insurance. He would like to see more of the District's incentives targeted to the area and to be coached on how to obtain bank financing. This is just one of many businesses that help make Barracks Row a success.





Travis Coleman of Capitol Hill Bikes

restaurants, but it is feared that the daytime and evening customer base cannot sustain the number of restaurants that are developing in the area, so more retail options are being sought. The District's Comprehensive Plan indicates that they would like to see Barracks Row, Market Row and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE (6th Street to 9 Street, SE) connected to create a seamless shopping area.

Success of BRMS and the Capitol Hill BID

The Capitol Hill area is looking more vibrant now than it did five years ago. Since 1999, BRMS has helped to create the conditions for substantial development. The Capitol Hill BID contains 562 properties and Barracks Row accounts for almost one-fourth of them. Since then, BRMS has attracted 47 businesses and 28 of them have opened in the last two years. There is an ongoing effort to preserve historic integrity, diversity and community values in the area's boutiques, restaurants and shops. The streetscape renovation has made the area more pedestrian friendly and welcoming. Barracks Row is a member of Cultural Tourism DC, which is supported by the Mayor's Office of Planning and Economic Development. The organization is charged with promoting

www.capitolhillbikes.com



It's all about partnership, partnership, partnership

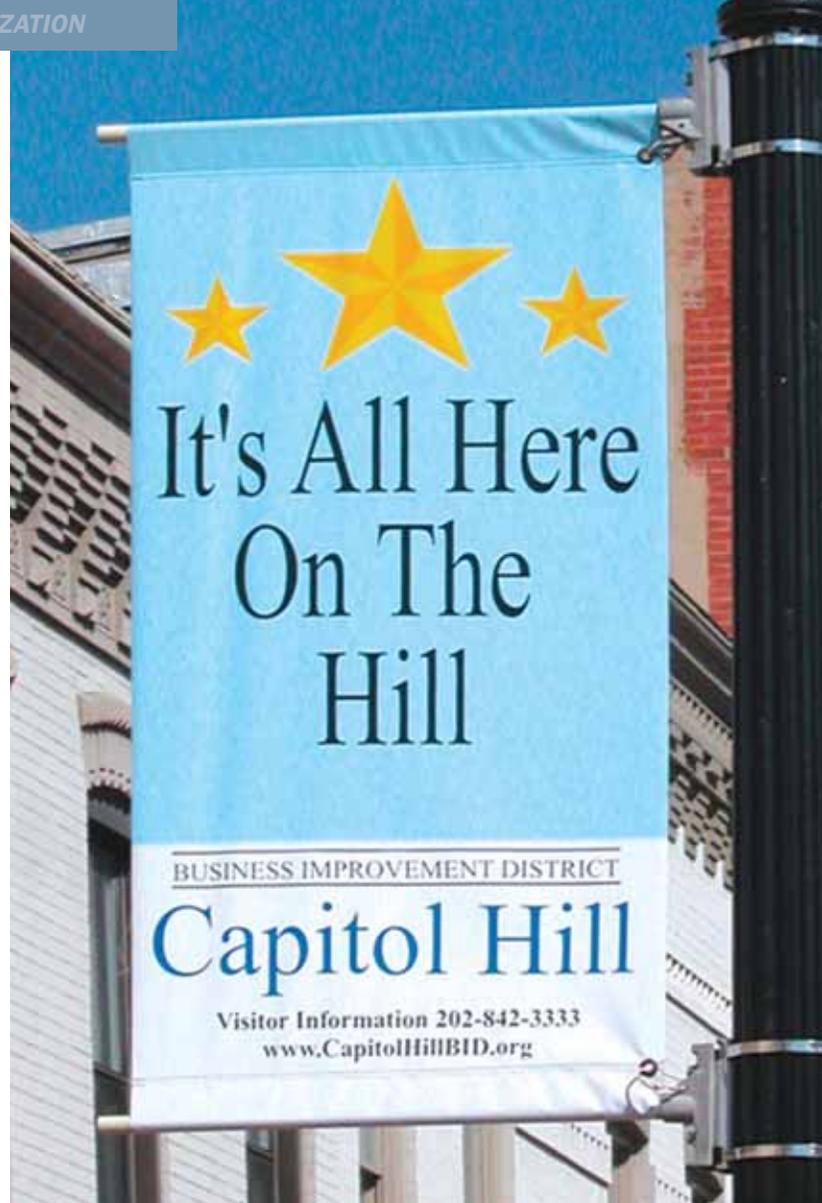
With such a wide-array of businesses near Capitol Hill, visitors and residents have unlimited shopping options.

the city's neighborhoods and attracting visitors to "Neighborhood Trails" which tell the history of these diverse neighborhoods.

Sometimes referred to as "off the mall" tourism, it encourages people to leave familiar and well-known monuments on the national mall and venture into the city's neighborhoods. This program is funded by the District's Department of Transportation and offers a self-guided walking tour through the city's neighborhoods. In an effort to promote the area, Barracks Row worked closely with the organization to develop their trail entitled, "Tour of Duty" to tell the history of the neighborhood and the influence of the Marine Barracks and

Success of both the Capitol Hill BID and Barracks Row Main Street project can be attributed to:

- A committed group of people willing to invest their time and energy to work together to make Capitol Hill a better and more viable place to work, shop, own a business and live;
- Recognition of the need to partner with other organizations and leverage the strengths of a network of partners from the private and public arenas;
- A compassionate method of addressing homelessness and economic needs by creating new job opportunities for needy individuals and local residents;
- A host of District and federal enhancement programs that can be accessed to provide funding and tax initiatives to developers and business owners.
- The National Capital Bank of Washington's \$4 million commitment to fund businesses on Barracks Row through its various products;
- Political support received from the District government to initially sponsor the bill authorizing the BID and put into place a government sponsored Main Street program;
- Recruitment of a talented professional staff that has provided sustained leadership and a dedicated board of directors that contribute countless volunteer hours; and
- Partnership and support of the District Department of Transportation, which provided \$7.5 million for the reconstruction of the Barracks Row streetscape.



the Navy Yard. At the same time, the District decided to redevelop area public housing into a brand new mixed-income community using the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Hope VI grant. These conditions are creating a tourist and visitor friendly environment that offers a unique glimpse of history in a modern setting.

Future plans for BRMS include creating an arts environment by converting the storage spaces found on the two interior courtyards in the alleys off of 8th Street into working artist studios; sustaining existing businesses and attracting new business with a focus on retail; and developing statistical measures to evaluate success. These plans flow well with the District's initiative to become a city that has more galleries, performing arts spaces, crafts shops, restaurants and interesting retail niches — all of which make for livelier neighborhoods. There is no doubt that BRMS and the Capitol Hill BID's efforts have developed and will continue to sustain a model urban community. MW

Five Rivers CDC Rides High Tides in Culture and Community

by Pat Cosby



Beulah P. White, executive director of Five Rivers Community Development Corporation, has been a visionary to the organization since its existence.



Located on the South Carolina coast, Georgetown County houses what was once the largest paper mill in the country. Known for its oceanfront location and situated 60 miles north of Charleston, Georgetown appears to be a typical waterfront community with the usual scenery of specialty shops, restaurants and small businesses. But travel further into the region and a distinct culture with very familiar affordable housing and community development needs is revealed.

Fortunately, this coastal county, which harbors the inflow of five rivers (the Pee Dee, Sampit, Santee, Waccamaw and Black rivers), is also home to the Five Rivers Community Development Corporation (FRCDC) which addresses many of the affordable housing and economic development issues of an area whose primary heritage is Gullah. Almost three centuries ago, slaves were brought to the area from West Africa. Due to the area's isolated location, the inhabitants of this region have been able to retain much of their African culture and language known as Gullah or Geechee. As one of 63 identified community development corporations (CDCs) in South Carolina, FRCDC promotes a healthier community, fosters economic and leadership opportunities, and educates others about Gullah culture.

FRCDC promotes a healthier community, fosters economic and leadership opportunities, and educates others about Gullah culture.

The Affordable Housing Wave

Beulah Priest White, executive director of FRCDC, speaks with passion and commitment about the organization, which was launched in 1994 under the umbrella of Baskervill Ministries and incorporated in 1995. She eagerly shares the vision, strategies and accomplishments of the organization, explaining that they want to make a difference in individuals' lives.

According to 2000 Census data, 15.9 percent of households in Georgetown County had incomes below poverty in 1999. The percentage of families living in poverty in the county decreased over the last decade from 15.8 in 1989 to 13.4 in 1999, but the average unemployment rate for the county was 10.8 percent with service, manufacturing and retail trades as the top three sources of employment. In 1999, 30.36 percent of



**Poplar Place
was the first affordable
housing development
FRCDC completed.**

the total population fell into the Safety Net, meaning they either received or were eligible to receive food stamps, services from Medicaid and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). White explains that FRCDC has undertaken several initiatives, developing and implementing programs to address affordable housing. “We are in one of two of the fastest growing counties in South Carolina,” said White. “We are morally and duty bound to ensure that low-income working families, and increasingly, middle-class families have access to affordable homes.” The nonprofit seeks to develop both multi-family units and single-family homes for low- to moderate-income residents.

FRCDC considers one of its most successful developments, the Poplar Place project, to be a true testament to family. Located in the Pawleys Island area, Poplar Place was the first affordable housing development FRCDC completed. Realizing that affordable housing in Pawleys Island was becoming extinct and the population had increased by 20 percent from 1990 to 2000 in and near Georgetown, FRCDC decided to act quickly before land

prices soared too dramatically. White attributes the population growth to an overflow of development in neighboring Charleston and Horry counties.

FRCDC acquired the property in 1995 with the help of one of their former board members and faced many challenges during the development process, one of which was to convince a builder to take on a project of this size. Poplar Place was a relatively small housing development project and White indicated that most builders shy away from affordable housing projects. “Because of increasing development opportunities, they don’t have to do what they consider a small project like Poplar Place,” she said. The search for a willing builder took three to four months. Poplar Place cost approximately \$897,000 to develop including infrastructure costs such as paving the subdivision’s entrance and bringing in needed sewer services.

Poplar Place consists of eight three-bedroom, two-bathroom homes with a kitchen and living room. The homes were sold to Georgetown County residents who earned

“We are morally and duty bound to ensure that low-income working families, and increasingly, middle-class families have access to affordable homes.”

Beulah White

FRCDC also provides a homebuyer training program called “I Want My House” for first-time homebuyers.

between 60 to 80 percent of the area’s median income. In 2002 the median income for the area was \$44,500. This translated into homes valued at \$70,000 to \$80,000. The homes were actually appraised at a market value of \$92,000, but FRCDC subsidized the houses. However, the homeowners pay taxes on the appraised value. Completed in 2001, the development includes couples, families with children and single parents.

Poplar Place was funded by several federal, state and county agencies: the McAuley Institute; Rural LISC; the South Carolina Housing and Development Authority; the South Carolina Department of Commerce; and Georgetown County Council. Plantation Federal and Carolina First Banks provided a bridge loan for the project while Bank of America and Carolina First provided mortgage financing. FRCDC used a variety of grants and loans to help clients with downpayment and closing costs. No matter how great the demand for land becomes in Pawleys Island, Poplar Place is intended to always remain affordable. The homeowners are under a covenant that puts the property back into the hands of FRCDC if the homeowner decides to sell within a 10-year period. The next owner of the property must meet FRCDC’s guidelines.

The success of the Poplar Place project has not gone unrecognized. The South Carolina Community Development Association presented its annual award of excellence to Georgetown County in 2002 for the project. This

Despite the challenges of undertaking a major affordable housing project, FRCDC has created proud homeowners such as Delores Wigfall.



award is presented to organizations whose projects have significantly improved their community and have the potential to be a catalyst for further improvements to the quality of life. The South Carolina Department of Commerce also nominated Poplar Place for a HUD Best Practices Award because it was the first quality, affordable subdivision to be built in the Pawleys Island area.

Even though White said she doubts FRCDC will pursue another project in the area because of climbing property values, they will continue to work on affordable housing, but on a smaller scale. The corporation will also rely on partnerships. White is proud FRCDC has helped the area address affordable housing needs. Poplar Place proves what can be accomplished.

Honing in on Homeownership

In addition, FRCDC also provides a homebuyer training program called “I Want My House” for first-time homebuyers. The program serves as a foundation for the organization’s housing counseling and development services. Upon completion of the program’s requirements, participants learn how to determine whether to buy a home; the major steps involved in the purchase; a lender’s process for mortgage loan qualification; budget and finance requirements; and post-closing information which includes tax planning, maintaining a home and handling financial adversity. White indicated that this was a necessary component of the affordable housing equation because finding

Since its inception, 75 people have graduated from the program and 30 of the participants have purchased homes.





Beverly Smith, a photographer, and Annette Sessions, a caterer, were participants in FRCDC's entrepreneurship program.

“Diamonds in the Rough,” trains couples, single female heads-of-households and youth...

qualified buyers for new homes is just as challenging as completing construction of the property. “The risk is very high,” said White. “You can’t change habits and behaviors over night.” Since its inception, 75 people have graduated from the program and 30 of the participants have purchased homes.

FRCDC will continue to help homeowners with any problems they might face, but feels that the ultimate goal is to step back and let the residents work together on any issue that arises. As a result, homeowners have formed a community association and White believes that the investment that FRCDC made is far beyond the building of the homes. They’ve also invested in building a community. FRCDC seeks to “turn the tide” for Georgetown County, building the community’s capacity while improving the quality of life for all.

Empowering Entrepreneurs

In continued efforts to address the area’s needs, FRCDC fosters economic development through job and entre-

preneurial training. White emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurship in the area. “He who owns the purse strings has the power,” she says. “Economics is powerful.” Through its economic and leadership development program, “Diamonds in the Rough”, the FRCDC trains couples, single female heads-of-households and youth between the ages of 14 and older to identify, access and leverage capital for business development. The program, which is named for the process a diamond must go through before its brilliance is revealed encourages participants to develop sustainable full-time income opportunities through business development. The program is geared toward displaced workers, youth and economically disadvantaged adults and gives participants an avenue to explore and eventually gain the satisfaction of entrepreneurship.

Now in its eighth year, the program offers one year of technical training with the following components:

- Outreach — identifying participants and mentors;
- Mentor orientation and development;
- A self-sufficiency assessment plan with realistic goal setting;

***“He who owns the purse
strings has the power.”***

Beulah White

Zenobia Washington, also a graduate of the "Diamonds in the Rough" program shows off one of her ethnic doll masterpieces.

- Meetings where participants share progress plans and engage in brainstorming sessions;
- Goal-oriented training sessions catering to individual learning styles;
- Computer training and Internet access availability;
- Credit counseling;
- Business plan development; and
- Market research analysis.

FRCDC works with start-up businesses and individuals who want to increase their wealth. Utilizing the seven styles of learning, FRCDC uses seven different assessments for different types of learners, based on the work of Howard Gardner, a leading developmental psychologist. This holistic approach used for entrepreneurial training extracts from math, science, arts and psychology. The program looks at people for their emerging potential, which allows them to use and build on skills that they already possess. Along with classroom style presentations, program participants work with a mentor who helps and encourages them throughout the learning process. The program is funded through grants from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Business Enterprise, and HUD-EDI special projects.

Other partners include Horry-Georgetown Technical College, Georgetown County agencies, the Georgetown County School District, the South Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations and the South Carolina Department of Commerce.

To date, 134 participants have graduated from the program. Fifty-nine businesses have been started, expanded or are operating with 159.5 total jobs created or preserved. Several of the new businesses started without incurring any debt. Zenobia K. Washington, a graduate of Diamonds in the Rough, explained the personal benefits she gained from the program. As an entrepreneur, she knew that she possessed the creative skills to craft ethnic-style dolls, but the program offered her what she needed from a



FRCDC also offers an Individual Development Account (IDA) program, the first of its kind in South Carolina.

business perspective — accounting, interpersonal skills, confidence and access to contacts after completing the program. “The program provides the support system you need to survive,” said Washington.

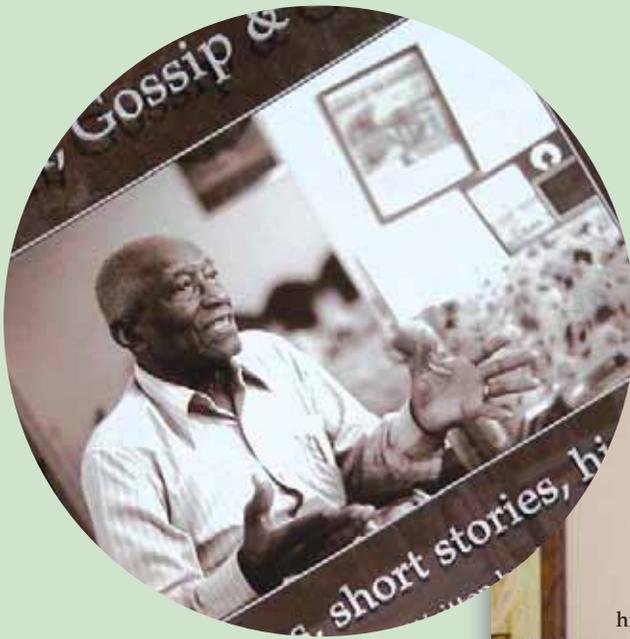
FRCDC also offers an Individual Development Account (IDA) program, the first of its kind in South Carolina. The program supports asset building of low- to moderate-income families through IDAs and other tools that build financial independence. The program provides \$3 in matching funds for every \$1 a participant saves. An individual must meet specific qualifications such as residency requirements, total household income that qualifies for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), total family income that falls within the 200 percent federal level determination and/or current or former TANF recipients who are currently employed. Monthly deposits must come from earned income, which can include traditional wages or self-employment. The 3:1 return on savings helps people develop savings accounts for home purchases, business start-ups or post-secondary education. The ultimate goal of the IDA program is to establish a life-long pattern of saving. FRCDC celebrates the accomplishments of this program as the first CDC in South Carolina, whose participants used IDA funds for all three purposes.

Creating Cultural Lessons

FRCDC takes pride in promoting Gullah culture, especially since the Gullah way-of-life is in danger of fading away due to land loss, high taxation, an increasing tourist-driven economy, a stagnated local educational system and an influx of retirees who are moving to the area. In May 2004, the Washington DC-based National Trust for Historic Preservation named the Gullah/Geechee Coast as one of America’s 11 “Most Endangered Historic Places.” The designation brings national recognition to Gullah culture to increase the chances of funding to preserve historic sites in coastal areas — from Wilmington, NC, to Jacksonville, FL, — which are being threatened by development. The designation also serves as a reminder that Gullah culture exists in the “Lowcountry” mainland and not just on the “Sea Islands.”

FRCDC takes pride in promoting Gullah culture.

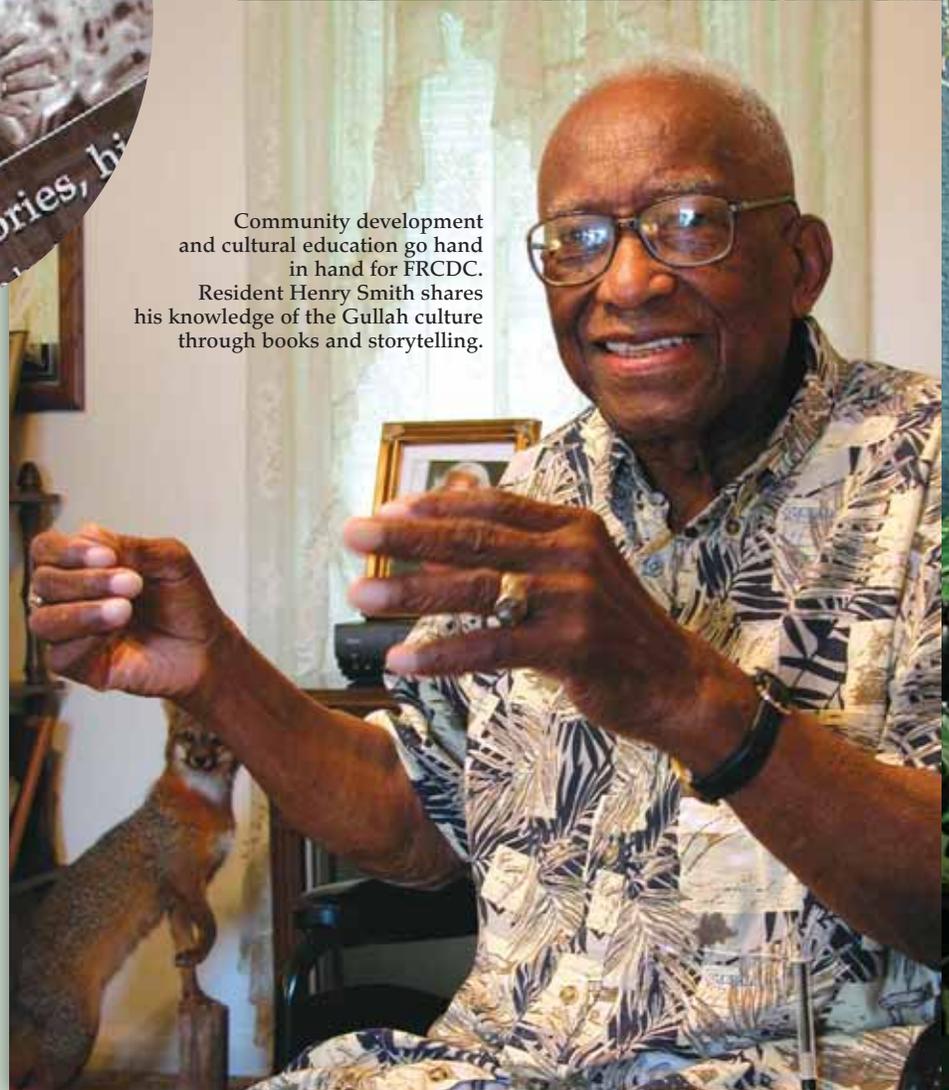
Although often identified by the language, the term Gullah is not only a form of communication but a way of life.



Community development and cultural education go hand in hand for FRCDC. Resident Henry Smith shares his knowledge of the Gullah culture through books and storytelling.

White acknowledges and brings attention to this declining culture by developing the "Southern Odyssey Tour." Participants partake of Gullah cuisine, meet and fellowship with descendants and explore various aspects of Gullah history. Founded eight years ago, the tour seeks to help non-Southerners gain a better understanding of the region and the culture. "An average tourist wouldn't have access to this type of tour. They wouldn't meet the Gullah people and have exposure to their cultural traditions," said White.

Today, scholars estimate that nationally, approximately one-third of African Americans can trace their roots back to the Gullah region. The term Gullah refers to a language spoken by descendants of enslaved African ethnic groups. The language combines elements of West African dialects with English pidgin-based characteristics of the language spoken by 17th and 18th century American colonists. The enslaved Africans were very diverse, speaking many different languages — thus the Gullah language was born in holding pens as a means of communication for the first generation born in America.



Although often identified by the language, the term Gullah is not only a form of communication but a way of life. The term encompasses the entire culture of unique traditions, arts and crafts, food preparation, storytelling, religion and spirituality, beliefs, songs, proverbs and much more. With the influence of television and the inroads of modern culture since the 1950s, concerns have increased that many of the traditions will be lost. More alarming to the Gullah people is new development springing up along the coastal area that will result in the loss of their land and culture.

The Gullahs base many of their beliefs on an African worldview that land cannot be owned. Instead they believe it is shared by

Vermelle “Bunny” Rodrigues and her husband, Andrew, own Gullah O’oman, where they share history and artifacts. Andrew stands beside one of Bunny’s original quilts.



people, most often by family members. Gullah people acquired or inherited significant tracts of land during and after the Civil War. The land was passed on to surviving generations and is often referred to as heir's property. The construction of bridges, in the middle 1950s, connecting the coastal sea islands with mainland areas led to land development in the form of gated communities with expensive homes, country clubs and hotels. This movement brought about increasing land development initiatives directed toward properties owned by Gullahs.

Gullah people have developed an acute awareness about the necessity of a legal deed to land and that social customs, heritage or tradition will not ensure the passage of land from parent to offspring. Many Gullah people lost or were forced to sell their land and move away as a consequence of rising taxes that came with suburban development. For the Gullah people, the loss of land has meant a loss of culture.

Through the Southern Odyssey Tour, FRCDC strives to provide the right balance among service, history lessons and meeting people. The tour is designed to provide an awareness of the richness of the culture — a land where one can see a glimpse of Africa in a way that is not present anywhere else in America. Storytellers and community tour



Bunny Rodrigues displays an African grass doll.





Patricia J. Bradley, chair of the board of directors of FRCDC, along with White, Jessie Walker, and Dayo Smith of FRCDC work to create better opportunities for the area's residents.

guides reveal much information about the Gullah culture and language. Weaved throughout their stories are descriptions of Gullah people — proud, self-sufficient and curious. They stress birthright, and that Gullah people should trumpet their culture proudly — therefore fighting for existence and prohibiting the culture to be minimized. As a rural nonprofit, FRCDC continues to tell its own story: that recognizing history can only improve and enhance the well-being of all people. **MW**



We Want to Hear From You!!!

Starting next year, MARKETWISE Magazine will introduce a "Letters to the Editor" section. Did an article inspire and motivate you or your organization to try something new? Or do you have a comment about how we covered a topic or issue? Tell us what's on your mind and your letter may be published.* Email comments to: Jennie.Blizzard@rich.frb.org with your name, address and daytime phone number.

***Disclaimer:**
Comments may be edited for length and clarity.

Contributors



Michele



Pat



Geep



Cindy

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS RICHMOND OFFICE

Daniel D. Tatar
Assistant Vice President
and Community Affairs Officer

Patricia T. Cosby
Senior Manager, Community Affairs

Michele A.M. Bell
Manager II

Frances D. Stanley
Senior Community Affairs Analyst

Lisa A. Hearl
Community Affairs Analyst II

Jennie W. Blizzard
Community Affairs Editor

Cindy R. Elmore
Community Affairs Writer

Mary C. Bland
Staff Assistant

Deborah C. Jackson
Staff Assistant

BALTIMORE OFFICE

Franklin N. McNeil Jr.
Community Affairs Representative

CHARLOTTE OFFICE

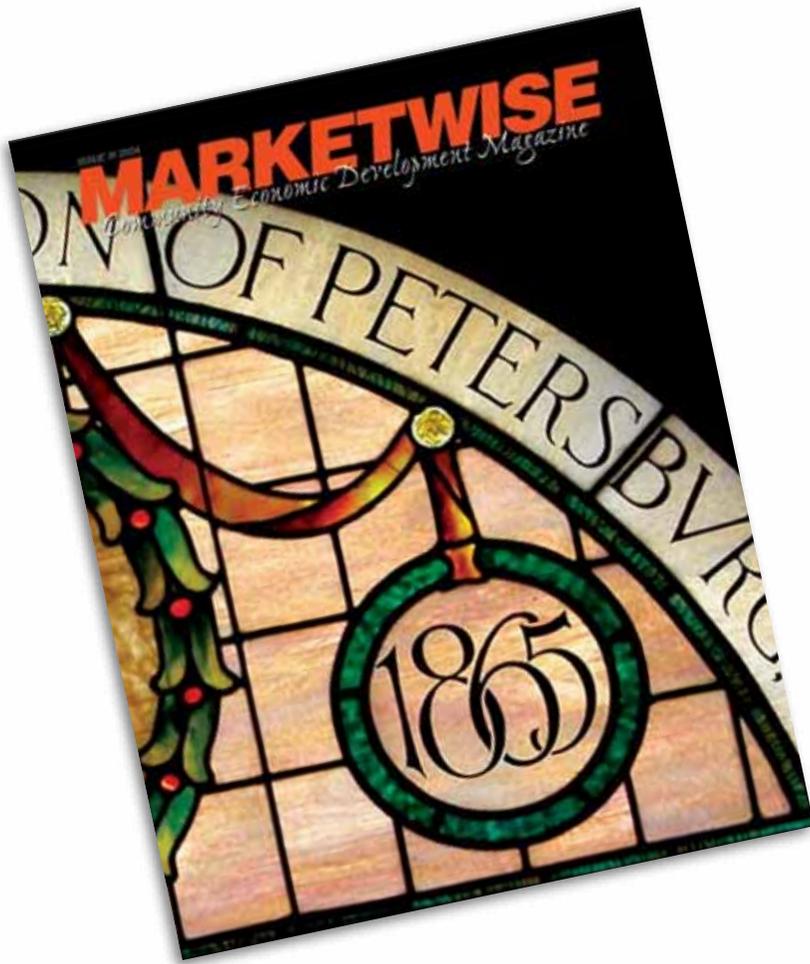
Carl N. Neely Jr.
Community Affairs Representative

To Inquire About Other CAO Publications, Contact:

Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond • Community Affairs Office • P.O. Box 27622 • Richmond, VA 23261 • www.rich.frb.org/cao/
Phone: (804) 697-8457 • Fax: (804) 697-8473

MARKETWISE welcomes story ideas and suggestions from lenders, community organizations and economic development professionals.

Comments to the editor are welcomed. E-mail: Jennie.Blizzard@rich.frb.org



MARKETWISE

Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond
P.O. Box 27622
Richmond, VA 23261-7622

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

**Presorted
Standard**
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 2
Richmond, VA