

Business Plan Competition Inspires Competitiveness

By Sheri Ann Richerson
The Courier Editor

The Grant County Innovative Host Network along with Mike Bates, Director of the Innovative Enterprises Program of Taylor University's Center for Research and Innovation will host a business plan com-

petition for residents in or near Grant County.

The competition which begins accepting applications on February 21, 2005 hopes to infuse the spirit of entrepreneurship through a professional competition.

Prizes, including some cash prizes, will be awarded to those who present ideas with the

greatest commercialization potential. Ideas or inventions will be presented in a phased approach for evaluation by a panel of judges composed of academic and business professionals. It is anticipated that winners will be announced by June 2005.

"This competition is an excellent way to identify those

with innovative business ideas and provide capital assistance to those with the greatest commercial potential," Jeff Southworth of Southworth Ford said.

For more information contact Bates at 765-998-4605 or Tim Eckerle of the Grant County Economic Growth Council at 888-668-3203.

Information You Should Know About Dental Health Hygiene

By Sheri Ann Richerson
The Courier Editor

February is dental health month and there is no better time to think about scheduling a visit to your local dentist. Bacteria and plaque are the two main causes of dental problems. Although advanced technology has allowed the creation of improved methods of controlling the plaque build-up and bacteria at home, it does not eliminate the need for a trip to your local dentist for professional cleanings.

The newest item on the market, the Dental Air Force which can be seen at <http://www.dentalairforce.com> claims to take away the need for brushing and flossing. This item is the first and only technology of its kind.

"The appliance uses a precision jet of air to deliver water and dental cleaner to "power wash" the mouth. Plaque and

odor are removed from teeth, in between teeth and around the gum line," according to Pia Brown, Air Force Inc.

"University clinical studies show the system's abrasivity is at a safe level and is uniform on cheek-side, tongue-side and between teeth surfaces. It is particularly effective for patients with crowns, bridges and orthodontic appliances. For periodontal patients, it is a valuable tool in home care."

I did request a sample of this product so that I could see if it did work and do just what it claims to do. However, according to Brown numerous others had beat me to the punch and chose not to report their findings. That really made me wonder if the product worked at all. So, I called on several local dentists to get their opinions about the product.

Two of the three dentists that I was able to reach said they had not heard of this product and did not know anything

about it.

Raymond M Maddox DDS, Hartford City Dentist told me that many times if a product was not approved by the American Dental Association (ADA), and I could not locate whether this one was or not, that is implicated that the company was most likely sidestepping the certification for some reason. He said that did not necessary mean it was a bad product but there were issues pertaining to the product that could not be address in scientific terms.

Upon a phone call back to Brown, I did find out that the product was not ADA approved. "It is FDA approved," she said. "FDA is a federal branch. We felt it was a more objective group. ADA approval requires hundreds of thousands of dollars. The ADA is an entry fee type of organization. I did not feel we needed ADA approval."

According to Maddox, the

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was looking at devices a few years ago such as implants that are placed in human beings. The FDA was doing lots of testing on medical but nothing on dental. Because of the new research they were doing, they decided to take a look at dental as well.

This lead to the FDA contacting the ADA about getting a panel set up to test dental products. The ADA already was doing this through members who were volunteering their services to be on a testing panel. The FDA was happy because essentially this cost them nothing and the public was already being protected.

"We are always looking for something better," Maddox said. "However, if they don't take the time to get an ADA seal of approval then we do not know how well the product works."

Over Twenty Years Later Bil's Foods Still Has A Heart For The Community



William McGriff stands in front of the meat section at his store in downtown Hartford City.

By Sheri Ann Richerson
The Courier Editor

When William McGriff began working in step-fathers retail business at the age of seven he certainly had no way of knowing that sixty years later he would still be in the working in the retail business. Although a lot has changed over the years, including the fact that McGriff now owns the grocery store he works in, many aspects such as giving customers individual service has remained the same.

The building Bil's Foods is in located at 208 North Jefferson Street in Hartford City began in 1952 as a Gas-N-Shop. In 1957 it became Joe's Foods. Approximately twenty years ago, McGriff and a partner decided to buy Joe out. Ten years ago McGriff decided to buy his partner out and rename the business Bil's Foods.

"I named it Bil's Foods because in order to change the sign and add the extra I it would have cost a fortune," McGriff said.

Owning a grocery store has not been a picnic, especially with the tough economic times according to McGriff. "I feel fortunate to still be in business. The drop that happened after September 11th has hurt everyone in the retail business. The economy has never recouped completely," McGriff said.

His secret to remaining in business even with the hard times, he says is giving each customer individual service and the fact that everyone needs food. McGriff also said he feels like his wife and himself have always been a part of the community and that they continue to try to give back to the community which certainly helps.

Bil's Foods recently became involved with the 'Have a Heart for the Hungry' when State Representative Tim Harris from Marion chose them to be one of his partner agencies for the program. This is just one more way the McGriff has chosen to give back to the community that has supported his business for so many years.

The Oliver Winery - Gourment Food, Wine and History All In One Place

By Sheri Ann Richerson
The Courier Editor

When Oliver Winery was opened in 1972 by Professor William Oliver and Mary Oliver little did they know that their business one day would be listed in the Wall Street Journal as one of the top twelve wineries to visit in the United States or that it would become Indiana's oldest and largest winery.

Today, Oliver Winery located off State Road 37 in Bloomington, Indiana is owned by Bill and Kathleen Oliver. This year they have been celebrating thirty years in the wine making business by having a celebration logo created for their wine glasses as well as introducing a new champagne called Celebration.

Oliver Winery's Creekbend Vineyard, which is five miles west of the winery, covers thirty-five acres and hosts fourteen different types of grapes. "Hopefully within the next few years we will be able to expand the vineyard to cover sixty-five acres," according to Sherry Fisher, Director of Marketing and Promotions. "That will still only account for three percent of our total wine production. We purchase additional grapes from vineyards outside the state."

Another recent addition to the winery was the planting of a one acre demonstration vineyard. Located along State Road 37, next to the winery this demonstration vineyard will give visitors to the winery a chance to observe up close the growth of two grape varieties; Chardonnay and Chambourcin.

In addition to having the opportunity to tour the demonstration vineyard, visitors to Oliver Winery have the opportunity to join in

complimentary wine tasting and weekend tours of the production facility. Visitors to the winery simply need to listen for the announcement that one will be taking place when they are visiting. The winery's friendly and knowledgeable staff helps customers to feel comfortable with the wines by suggesting that they taste up to seven or eight varieties from more than fifteen choices. The staff always ensures the safety of each customer so tasting is limited.

The staff are also trained to be alert to those who may wish to taste the wines but are not of the legal age. Those who appear to be underage are asked to provide 2-3 pieces of identification.

"All wines are different because of the art behind the science. "First and foremost, a good wine starts with good fruit. A wine maker," according to Fisher, "can choose to employ a variety of techniques to ensure the highest quality in the end product." Deciding on different methods she says takes time and experimentation. The idea is to find out what tastes good and what captures the fruity quality of each variety. "I don't think you ever duplicate what you've done before. Hopefully it always gets better," Fisher concludes.

In addition to being able to purchase various wines, the other thing that makes Oliver Winery such a neat place to visit and shop is the well trained staff. "The staff here are trained to help customers select the wines that are right for them, whether the customer is a first time buyer or experienced wine connoisseur. We want to take the intimidation away so that everybody can enjoy wine," Fisher advised. "By the time someone leaves they have ample information to make an informed purchase."