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LANCASTER COUNTY

Group hopes to start creative-reuse center in Lancaster



PHOTO/SUBMITTED

Joseph Quesada, left, and Andrew Rohrer cut and weld steel sculptures during a workshop at Keystone Art & Culture Center. Keystone is collaborating with Andrea Stoner Leaman to launch Lancaster Creative Reuse, which will collect cast-off materials for local arts and educational communities.

BY PAULA HOLZMAN
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A midstate nonprofit is working to begin a place that provides a constructive use for the area's cast-off materials.

The effort to begin Lancaster Creative Reuse is being led by Andrea Stoner Leaman, a Lancaster County native who is earning her master's degree in social work at Temple University.

Creative-reuse centers — about 60 exist nationwide — collect items such as factory seconds, wallpaper samples, discarded decorations from events and surplus supplies, then sell

or give away the items.

"The general idea is for a store that builds on the exploding interest in crafting and reuse, as well as Lancaster County's thriftiness and thriving art scene, by providing materials that can be used by anyone who is looking to create something (teachers, daycares, artists, crafters, parents, event planners)," Leaman wrote in an e-mail.

She is collaborating with a committee of people interested in the idea and with Lancaster-based Keystone Art & Culture Center, a nonprofit gallery and educational foundry, to bring such a center to the Red Rose City.

please see **CREATIVE**, page 9

REGION

THE DOCTOR IS IN Midstate companies open health clinics for their employees



PHOTO/AMY SPANGLER

Certified pharmacy technician Kaitlyn Gould, left, and pharmacy director Paul Decker fill prescriptions at the pharmacy in the employee health center at Highmark Inc. facility in East Pennsboro Township, Cumberland County.

BY PAULA HOLZMAN
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Workplace wellness programs are founded on the concept that a healthy employee is a happy, productive and less costly employee.

In the past few months, two midstate companies have taken that philosophy a step further, creating in-house primary-care clinics and pharmacies.

They're part of what industry officials say is a growing number of — mainly larger — companies to provide the service to their workers.

Snyder's of Hanover in April opened its clinic at the Hillside Medical Center, about 2.5 miles from the plant. The clinic is run by Nashville-based CareHere and includes a pharmacy that dispenses 140 generic drugs.

please see **DOCTOR**, page 11

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Independence day: Firm reborn in wake of acquirer's demise

BY TIM STUHLREHER
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Edward Balsavage and Philip Burtner had thought about partnering for some time. They just didn't realize their hands would be forced.

In March, the engineering firm they worked for, CMX Inc., abruptly went out of business, and they had to act quickly.

Within less than a week they formed



Balsavage



Burtner

Advantage Engineers. The Lower Allen Township-based firm provides a full range of civil, structural, environmen-

tal, geotechnical and telecommunication engineering services.

Balsavage and Burtner had been CMX principals, heading divisions that originally were independent companies. Manalapan, N.J.-based CMX was known as Schoor DePalma in 2006 when it bought Advantage Engineering, a firm Balsavage founded in the Mechanicsburg area in 2001. Burtner had been a principal at Camden, N.J., firm Damiano Long, found-

ed in 2000, which Schoor DePalma bought in 2005.

CMX grew rapidly in the mid-2000s, taking on tens of millions of dollars in debt as part of its ambitious plan to expand nationwide. Then the recession hit. Employment shrank from more than 1,000 to about 500 in three years. There was no way to make the debt payments.

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REBORN

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Balsavage and Burtner expected an orderly wind-down or perhaps sale of the company to a competitor, though the debt overhang made that unlikely.

Instead, the e-mail they received the night of March 11 announced immediate closure of all but two offices the next morning, Friday, March 12. Only the Lansdale and Manalapan offices would remain open. They had more than 50 employees and had to stay open 60 days to comply with the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification or WARN Act, which requires advance warning of mass layoffs.

"It really took us by surprise," Burtner said.

They weren't the only ones: Their phones were ringing off the hook with frantic calls from clients and employees.

"I still can't believe it," Balsavage said. "We were mid-step in numerous projects."

Their fast work in setting up as Advantage Engineers preserved 60 jobs and provided continuity for all their clients' projects.

"They didn't miss a beat," said Lawrence Romanowski, the head of TowerOne Partners, a client company based in Doylestown.

It wasn't easy, Balsavage said.

Over eight weeks, the two essen-

tially founded a company while running it at the same time. They worked around the clock, Balsavage said, meeting with lawyers, filing documents, setting up their computing and network infrastructure, obtaining insurance, setting up an accounting system and so on.

They took over five CMX offices, four in Pennsylvania and one in Columbia, Md., and Burtner relocated a New Jersey office from Vorhees to new space in Mount Laurel. CMX agreed to sell them their existing office furniture and equipment.

Advantage Engineering and Damiano Long had collaborated before CMX, and Balsavage and Burtner said they have long known their businesses would naturally complement each other.

Among other synergies, the coupling of telecom and civil engineering allows Advantage Engineers to offer one-stop shopping to a major component of its client base: the cell tower industry.

"They're a critical part of our team," TowerOne's Romanowski said.

TowerOne partners with municipalities to build and manage cell towers on municipal land. Wireless companies lease the towers, providing a revenue stream to local governments.

Advantage Engineers handles everything from site selection to environmental compliance to design and construction management, Romanowski said. Working with a single firm is much easier than coordinating mul-

tiple subcontractors, he said.

Balsavage and Burtner said they're looking forward to getting back to a normal business routine with TowerOne and their other clients after the tumult of the past few months.

Both said they remain mystified by the abruptness of CMX's action.

"There was no consideration of the impact it had on others," Balsavage said.

Schoor DePalma adopted the name CMX in 2007 from a company it had acquired the year before.

The firm used \$74 million from a private equity firm to buy Damiano Long and Advantage Engineering, swelling to more than 1,000 employees at its mid-2000s peak, according to published reports. That had dropped to 500 as of November, according to the company.

Equity firm American Capital invested \$151 million in 2006, only to write off \$121 million of it in 2009, according to U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filings.

Other firms besides Advantage Engineers have acquired components of CMX. Birdsall Services Group has hired about 100 CMX employees, while others were hired by T&M Associates and Langan, according to published reports. All are New Jersey engineering outfits.

Although defunct, CMX had not declared bankruptcy when this story went to press. Efforts to contact the company for comment were unsuccessful. ■

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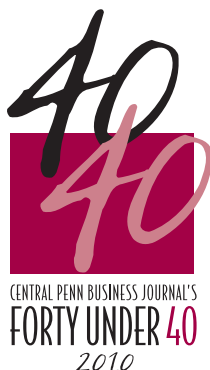
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