

The Middle Michigan Times

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Middle Michigan
Development Corporation

Representing the Central Michigan Region: The
Counties of Clare and Isabella

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MMDC
Quarterly Meeting
April 28th
7:30 a.m.
Mt. Pleasant
Country Club
Please Call for
More Information

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Creating Success 'One Hold At A Time'

In the beginning, James Bellanca and Rick Phelps had a dream of having their own climbing wall in Rick's garage, never thinking that in a few short years they would be co-owners of a large-scale corporation that out sells most of their competitors. **Cheap Holds Incorporated**, a top manufacturer of the holds used for climbing walls, as well as indoor and outdoor climbing gear, now sells its products to an ever expanding global market.

As a result of its

rapid growth, Cheap Holds was in dire need of a new building with more space. The decision was made to construct a building designed specifically to meet the unique needs of this corporation. Cheap Holds selected a location in Mount Pleasant's Lincoln Industrial Park. According to Bellanca, some of the benefits of this new location include tax incentives, the option to expand, an easy-to-find location, and over one acre of land.

Since moving into the new building, Cheap Holds' production abilities have greatly increased, allowing them to better serve their customer's demands. Although about two thirds of Cheap Hold's sales are mail/internet order, they feature a small retail area. Cheap Holds uses the proximity of Central Michigan University to its advantage by exclusively employing students. Bellanca is *(continued on page 2)* able to offer the students



"We want to continue to grow as a full service supplier" —James Bellanca

JD Metalworks Faces Exciting Time of Growth

JD Metalworks is a name known throughout Clare as an ever-expanding steel fabrication company, specializing in the welding and fabrication of all metals. The steel fabrication industry is very

demanding, especially when the company is growing relatively fast. In fact, the company reached capacity in their downtown location, which facilitated the move to the Clare Industrial Park.

As with most small towns, information spread fairly quickly when Duane Gottschalk and John Miller began considering purchasing a building or property in the *(continued on page 2)*

Cheap Holds (continued) from page 1)

able to offer the students flexible schedules, and that is a benefit to all.

Bellanca has indicated that it is a continuous challenge to remain a low profile company while they are growing exponentially. In addition to internet marketing, magazine advertisements and trade shows increase Cheap Holds' name recognition with the public. Because of this, Bellanca opts for

smaller advertisements to cut costs and then use the savings to create a superior product. Although Cheap Holds has exceeded the sales of many of the other leading hold manufacturers, they continue to maintain a small town image while keeping their prices lower than their competition.

In the next five to ten years, Bellanca hopes to acquire some of his other competitors, which would allow them to provide a broad spec-

trum of services to their customers. "We want to continue to grow as a full service supplier", James Bellanca says while discussing the future of his business. Cheap Holds, already a rising star in the 'holds' market, continues their innovative marketing style, looking to climb their way to the top, one hold at a time.

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JD Metalworks (continued)

Industrial Park. The head of the Clare Industrial Development Corporation, who is also the banker for JD Metalworks, thought of selling the old company's building to the city. Ideally, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) would purchase the current JD Metalworks buildings, which would then be razed to create expanded parking within the City of Clare. This was just what

Gottschalk and Miller needed to proceed with the purchase of the facility.

Gottschalk is excited about the more efficient and comfortable work environment at the industrial park. By moving all production under one roof, instead of five different buildings, many obstacles are removed. For instance, the new building will have the capacity to unload semi trucks inside

instead of outside. Also, the enhanced production ability at the new location will enable the company to increase their client base while continuing to provide their current clients with quality products.

This recent building project is just one part of the vision Gottschalk and Miller have for their company's future. Within five years

have for their company's future. Within five years JD Metalworks hopes to expand by another 20,000 square feet – the next logical step in the growth of JD Metalworks, allowing them the opportunity for even greater levels of success in the future!