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## **Pioneer**

February 20, 2006

### **Friends of Ferris 'Enjoy the Great Outdoors' at annual event**

BIG RAPIDS - Outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, canoeing and kayaking were highlighted at the 17th annual Friends of Ferris Dinner/Auction Fund-raiser, benefiting the Friends of Ferris Political Action Committee, Saturday evening at the Big Rapids Holiday Inn and Conference Center.

This year's theme, "Enjoy the Great Outdoors," was evident by the decorations of pine cones, hunting supplies, fishing tackle and gardening tools. Ferris State University administrators, faculty and alumni gathered with members of the Big Rapids community and state legislators to make this one of the premier social events on the FSU campus and in the community each year.

As the Friends 'of Ferris' primary fund-raiser, a total of 310 tickets were sold for the event and the auction raised more than \$28,000. Live auction items included a handmade log bench made by FSU Board of Trustees member Tom Cook, a drive at the Mecosta County Fair Celebrity Harness Race donated by Pat Currie, a seven-day stay at Bridge View Beach House on Bois Blanc Island donated by Rob and Kirsten Johnston, \$500 of dry cleaning and laundry services at Tubs and Tumble donated by Larry Lintemuth, a signed and framed black and white print created by FSU Resident Artist Robert Barnum and a charter fishing trip for four with Fishtown Charter Services donated by Ed and Dorothy Burch and Maxine McClelland. Silent auction items included an area rug donated by George Gilbert, a solid Oak rocker donated by Eric and Lori O'Neil, four tickets to a Whitecaps baseball game where two people will join announcer Dave Skoczen in the radio booth for three innings donated by Scott Lane, two box seats to a Grand Rapids Griffins hockey game and a team-autographed jersey donated by Frank DeMann and Bob Daniels, a Chris Kunitz autographed FSU hockey jersey donated by Bob III and Lynn Horan and a guided two-person 30-bird hunt in Buckley with the use of two dogs donated by Miles and Kellie Postema and Senator Deb Cherry.

The Friends of Ferris Political Action Committee was formed by leaders of Mecosta County and FSU employees in 1989 in order to improve Ferris' position on issues with state and federal officials, such as legislators. In the past, Friends of Ferris efforts helped secure funding for major capital projects including the Ferris Library for Information, Technology and Education, the Granger Center for Construction and HVACR, and renovation of the Timme Student Services building.

"This event helps tremendously with building campaigns on campus and program development, which in turn supports the local economy with more students on campus and more instructors in the classroom," said Karl Linebaugh, president of Chemical Bank West and past Friends of Ferris chair.

## **Pioneer**

February 20, 2006

### **Ferris' CareerQuest helps students explore majors**

BIG RAPIDS - Decided or undecided? That is the question making many new high school graduates break out into a sweat. But, next fall at Ferris State University first-time students will rest a little easier through a new living-learning community called CareerQuest.

CareerQuest, which will enroll its first group of students in the Fall of 2006, is a program designed to help students identify their interests and potential, or at least give them the tools to make successful choices in the future.

Added Dr. Michael Harris, vice president for Academic Affairs, "Most 18 year olds change their minds and that is O.K. The university experience is intended to expose students to new ideas that foster growth and change thus helping them maximize their potential."

The living-learning community experience does just that, offers an enhanced academic environment for student learning.

"This program is like teaching someone to fish instead of catching the fish for them," said William Potter, dean of the University College at Ferris. "Through this program, students will gain an understanding of how to think for themselves."

CareerQuest is tailored to help students explore career options and majors in one of five colleges at Ferris - Allied Health Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and Human Services, and Technology.

Students in this program will live together in a residence hall, take a common set of courses designed to help them learn about their interests and their aptitudes, and receive guidance from instructors, counselors, and academic advisors dedicated to this task while completing the general education requirements for any degree.

"Career exploration through CareerQuest takes students in their first year of college to a new and more sophisticated level," said Joan Totten, head of Ferris' Curriculum department. "I believe the CareerQuest program is a unique and exciting opportunity for students who are not quite certain about a major to begin their collegiate studies at Ferris State University."

For more information about CareerQuest or an application, visit [www.ferris.edu/colleges/university/CareerQuest](http://www.ferris.edu/colleges/university/CareerQuest).

## **Pioneer**

February 21, 2006

### **Students benefit from Newspapers In Education**

BIG RAPIDS - Some local schools are taking advantage of an interesting teaching tool... the Big Rapids Pioneer newspaper.

Students in Geoff Stewart's American government class at Big Rapids High School apply articles in the Pioneer to their government studies on a daily basis.

Newspaper in Education (NIE) is a cooperative effort between schools and newspapers to promote the use of newspapers as an educational resource. The Newspaper Association of America Foundation is the administrative organization for over 950 NIE programs in the United States.

The Foundation provides resources and training to newspapers and educators on using newspapers in schools; helps newspapers develop strategic plans for promoting and marketing their NIE services; and represents newspapers with a broad variety of educational partners. NIE provides online lesson plans and other innovative materials to provide valuable newspaper-oriented resources to teachers through the Internet.

Each Wednesday the students in Stewart's class are asked to hand-in a journal entry that includes discussion about a federal, state and local issue.

"In trying to build the NIE program for the Pioneer, I've learned what a real win-win situation looks like," said Pioneer Circulation Manager Diana Byrne. "NIE forms Partners in Education or an alliance between students, educators and local business/organizations.

The students are provided with real-time information relevant to their world in a format they respond to. "Educators receive newspapers at no cost to them or their school as well as access to free instructional tools through NIE affiliates.

The local businesses/organizations will receive recognition in the classroom as well as in the Pioneer as supporters of our students, educators and overall community literacy," Byrne said. "In addition, the cost of sponsorship can be deducted as a donation for tax purposes."

Currently Ferris State University, Chemical Bank and Isabella Bank and Trust are local sponsors for the NIE program.

"We're grateful for the sponsorships of local businesses in order to make NIE possible at BRHS," Stewart said.

Ryan Redinger's general science and math classes at Morely Stanwood Alternative High School have been applying issues from the Pioneer to their daily lessons as well.

"It's more interesting than a textbook because the issues are more current," said Morley Stanwood Alternative student Becka Hart. "We can read about the issues on a daily basis."

According to Redinger, the newspaper stimulates the students to want to read. "NIE is a great tool that is very beneficial to the students," Redinger said. "It's a great stimulant for reading because the information is local and pertinent to them."

For more information regarding this valuable program and becoming an NIE Partner In Education, contact Pioneer Circulation Manager Diana Byrne at (231) 592-8382.

## Pioneer

February 21, 2006

### **Comptons establish College of Technology endowment fund**

BIG RAPIDS- Joe and Suzette Compton of Big Rapids have established the Joe and Suzette Compton Family Endowment Fund, which will benefit Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration students in the College of Technology at Ferris State University.

The Comptons have enjoyed a multifaceted relationship with Ferris for more than 20 years- first as students then later as alumni and employees. Their diverse experiences in Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, and Student Affairs gives them a unique perspective of the University and its efforts to meet the needs of current and prospective students.

Mike Feutz, chair of the HVACR department at Ferris State University, is pleased that the Comptons established the endowment.

“Joe and Suzette’s desire to help students achieve their educational goals in the field of Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration will aid students for generations to come,” Feutz said. “Hopefully, their generosity and support will inspire the students they help to be good citizens that give back to the community, as they have done.”

The Scholarships will be granted in honor of the Compton’s three sons: Travis Joseph, a talented musician and composer who is engaging, intelligent and generously lends his talents to solve problems in his community; Matthew Charles, a loyal and trusted friend who enjoys playing the drums and pursuing a bachelor’s degree in History at Ferris; and Brandon James, who enjoys playing the piano and video games, and has a developing interest in the technical aspects of theatre.

Recipients of the Joe and Suzette Compton Family Scholarships shall have achieved sophomore, junior or senior academic status and be enrolled full-time in the HVACR program. Candidates also must have a 2.75 GPA as well as leadership potential. Scholarship funds may be applied to costs, related to attending the University including tuition, books and other education-related expenses.

For more information or to make a gift to the Joe and Suzette Compton Family Endowment Fund, please contact the Ferris Foundation at (231) 591-2365 or [fsufdn@ferris.edu](mailto:fsufdn@ferris.edu). Details about establishing scholarships or endowments may be obtained from the Advancement Office at (231) 591- 3825.

## **Pioneer**

February 22, 2006

### **Winter Orchestra Concert set for Sunday**

BIG RAPIDS - The Winter Orchestra Concert featuring the FSU West Central Chamber Orchestra directed by Richard Scott Cohen will take place Sunday afternoon at 4 p.m. in Williams Auditorium on the campus of Ferris State University.

The concert is free and open to the public. For assistance with attending this event, please call the Ferris State University Music Center at (231) 591-2501.

This year's annual winter string orchestra concert features a variety of classical hits by composers such as Purcell, Rossini and Verdi, as well as a newer work by Brian Israel.

The program will include the following works: "Chaconne," by Henry Purcell; "Dorian Variations," by Brian Israel; Overture to "Nabucco," by Giuseppe Verdi; "Sonatina Op. 48 No. 1," by Ignaz Pleyel; "String Sonata No. 1 in G," by Giaocchino Rossini; and "Tres Valses Poeticos," by Enrique Granados.

Currently celebrating its 39th season, the FSU West Central Chamber Orchestra ("WCCO") is sponsored by Ferris State University as part of its "Music for Life!" initiative. It is comprised of Ferris State University students, adult community members, and select students from throughout West Central Michigan. Ferris students can earn credit and scholarships for their participation in the WCCO by enrolling in Music 271.

Adult community members and qualified pre-university students recommended by their directors may participate free of charge. This string orchestra rehearses every Tuesday evening throughout the school year from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Music Center on FSU's main campus. All experienced players of string instruments are invited to join the orchestra. Please contact director Scott Cohen at (231) 591-2484 or [rscohen@ferris.edu](mailto:rscohen@ferris.edu) to get signed up.

## **The Grand Rapids Press**

February 24, 2006

### **'Hateful Things' comes to Kendall**

Just in time for Black History Month, a traveling exhibition of racist memorabilia has arrived at the Kendall Gallery of Kendall College of Art and Design to remind us of how far American society has come and how far we still have to go. "Hateful Things" opened Feb. 15 and showcases 39 items from the late 1800s through the present that embody the negative impact of the Jim Crow era.

Organized by Ferris State University's Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, the disturbing show features historical objects and images that show how African Americans were stereotyped and discriminated against after the Civil War. It also explores the violence directed toward them.

"Hateful Things" runs through March 10. For details, visit [www.kcad.edu](http://www.kcad.edu), or call 451-2787.

If you've ever wanted to own a Doezema or Wilson, a Kuilema, Kalinowski or the work of any other local artist but believed you couldn't afford it, head to the Kalamazoo Fairgrounds on Saturday for the 10th annual Garage Sale Art Fair. This massive art market features the "irregulars and leftovers" of 100 artists.

Think of it as a one-day Big Lots for artists. You'll find pottery, jewelry, glass, paintings, photography and works in other media at very affordable prices. The event runs 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is \$1. For details, visit [www.garagesaleartfair.com](http://www.garagesaleartfair.com).



## Washington Post

February 24, 2006

### Anti-Immigration Group to Meet in Herndon

Some fear conference could cause clashes in home of Va. Day-Laborer Debate.

About 300 followers of an organization labeled a "hate group" will gather at a Herndon hotel today for a conference at which speakers will expound on what they see as the global threat of immigration to whites and the moral and intellectual differences among races.

American Renaissance, a Fairfax County-based journal, will hold its seventh biennial conference at the Hyatt Dulles hotel. Its focus will be the "defense of Western civilization," organizers said.

Immigrants are "changing [white] societies in ways that most white people don't like," said Oakton resident Jared Taylor, the journal's editor.

The three-day conference has been held in Northern Virginia before. But some observers fear its presence in Herndon -- where recent controversy over a day-laborer hiring center spawned protests -- could bring trouble.

"Herndon suddenly has become a hotbed of discontent for anti-immigration groups," said Mukit Hossain, founder of Project Hope and Harmony, which runs the, laborers' hiring center. "I am concerned with the potential for hate crime which may be generated by events like this."

The workers' center will dispatch extra volunteers to help deal with any conflict that might arise, director Bill Threlkeld said. Police in Herndon and Fairfax County said they are aware of the conference but have no special plans for it.

Activists plan to protest outside the Hyatt and counter-protest at the job center if necessary, said Marco Del Fuego of the Olive Branch Community, a District group that advocates for immigrants.

Taylor said fears of confrontations are unfounded. He said the conference is being held in Herndon because it is convenient for many participants, whom he called "middle-aged white guys in coats and ties."

American Renaissance, founded in 1989, promotes two policies, Taylor said: stopping immigration and reversing all anti-discrimination laws.

The New Century Foundation, which publishes the journal, is considered a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, said Mark Potok, editor of the center's intelligence report.

"Basically, this is a batch of gussied-up white supremacists, but they are very much the button down crowd," Potok said.

This year's conference has attracted more registrants than ever, Taylor said. He attributed interest in part to speakers, who include Nick Griffin, chairman of the anti-immigration British National Party, who was acquitted this month of inciting racial hatred during a speech in which he called Islam a "wicked, vicious faith." Taylor also credited it to what he called an awakening by whites to "the crisis they face as a group."

**Barry Mehler, a professor at Ferris State University in Michigan and executive director of the Institute for the Study of Academic Racism, said the journal attracts arguments linking race and intelligence that have been "overwhelmingly rejected" by most scholars.**

Still, Mehler and Potok said a more conservative political climate and a mounting public backlash over immigration in recent years have provided fertile terrain for opposition to multiculturalism.

"The idea that America is losing its cultural identity because of immigration -- those are ideas that they have embraced for a long time," Mehler said. Now, he said, the ideas "resonate with a larger audience."

## **Pioneer**

February 27, 2006

### **FSU students participate in Walk for Warmth**

BIG RAPIDS - Charity begins at home, as the old saying goes, even if that home is a dorm room. Students from Ferris State University proved this to be true Saturday when they turned out in force to participate in this year's Walk for Warmth at the FSU Student Recreation Center.

Walk for Warmth is sponsored by the Mid Michigan Community Action Agency and raises funds to help provide needy families with help paying high heating bills and dealing with other unexpected household emergencies.

The walk at Ferris was only one of several fund raisers held within a six county area this past weekend. FireCAP, Inc. also held walks in Newaygo, Lake, Mason and Manistee counties.

Participants raised money by lining up sponsors prior to the walk, some of which were held outdoors, despite Saturday's frigid temperatures. In Reed City, walkers had the option of strolling indoors or out at the middle and high schools.

The organization's motto of: "Warm a heart, heat a home," -struck close to home as marchers made their way through their two-hour walk in the cold.

The Mid Michigan Action Agency also raises funds throughout the year with events such as dinners, drawings, auctions, bake sales, basketball games, raffles and T-shirt sales.

The agency also holds pop bottle drives, penny drives, Tupperware parties and numerous other fund raisers.

Organizers stress that money raised through all these efforts goes to help needy individuals within the community.

## **Michigan Chamber of Commerce**

February 27, 2006

### **Michigan Chamber Files Complaint Against Saginaw Valley State University For Unlawfully Operating a PAC and PAC Payroll Deduction Plan**

LANSING, Alone among the 11 university- related political action committees (PACs) registered with the Secretary of State, Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) has made no attempt to carefully manage its PAC -- Friends of Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) -- as an independent, off-campus operation, reports the Michigan Chamber of Commerce.

"Saginaw Valley State University has used university funds, personnel, office space, computer hardware and software, stationery, postage, supplies and other public resources to administer Friends of Saginaw Valley State University in violation of Section 57 of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA)," said Robert S. LaBrant, Senior Vice President of Political Affairs and General Counsel for the Michigan Chamber.

The Michigan Campaign Finance Law specifically prohibits "public bodies" like SVSU from making contributions or expenditures to influence the nomination, election, or defeat of candidates or the qualification passage or defeat of ballot questions, LaBrant noted. State law may allow public bodies to lobby governmental officials, but it specifically prohibits them from helping to elect them.

According to LaBrant, no other university in Michigan has a PAC as an in- house operation. "Most are carefully managed independently, off campus," said LaBrant. "No university funds are ever to be used. All administrative expenses are to be paid directly out of the PAC."

On February 16, 2006, a formal Michigan Attorney General opinion was released holding that a public body is prohibited from administering a payroll deduction plan for the collection of contributions to a PAC.

Among the 10 other university-related PACs in Michigan, M-PAC, the Green & White PAC, Friends of Oakland University, Friends of Ferris and Friends of Eastern Michigan University all appear to be operated in compliance with Section 57 of the MCFA as independently operated, off-campus operations.

Friends of Central Michigan University, Friends of Grand Valley State University, Friends of Northern Michigan University and Friends of Western Michigan University also appear to be operated independently, off campus. However, LaBrant noted, "those four universities offer their administrators, faculty and staff a university administered PAC payroll deduction plan. The legality of those payroll deduction plans is now in doubt with the recent AG opinion and Department of State rulings."

The Friends of Lake Superior State University PAC, was dissolved in 2000 and no PAC has ever been established promoting the interest of Michigan Technological University.

The Michigan Chamber is a statewide business organization which represents more than 6,800 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process.

## Lansing State Journal

February 27, 2006

### **Wickham designs ad firm success**

DELTA TOWNSHIP - John Wickham doesn't mind seeing a former intern outdo him.

Wickham, partner and co-founder of Zoot! Advertising Design, received an associate's in fine arts from the Kendall College of Art and Design in Grand Rapids. His former intern is there to get a bachelor's degree.

Wickham made a name for himself as a creative director of a Lansing advertising agency before starting his own company. But his intern wants to go on to bigger cities filled with more opportunity.

Wickham recently won two silver Addy Awards for his direct marketing efforts.

His intern won a silver and a gold for his Internet-interactive media work.

All of which is fine with Wickham. His former intern is his son, 23-year-old Sean.

And the younger Wickham is well on his way to following in his father's footsteps.

#### **Like father, like son**

"He took to it just like that," the elder Wickham said, snapping his fingers.

"It's been wonderful to see him really excel in this."

It was the father's idea for the son to give graphic arts a try after spending a year searching for a direction at Western Michigan University.

Like Sean, John Wickham also spent time doing other things before finding his way into advertising.

He spent 10 years as a carpenter after graduating from Waverly High School.

Translating blueprints into buildings wasn't difficult for Wickham, but the working conditions left much to be desired and he felt something was missing.

"You burn in the summertime and freeze in the wintertime," he said.

Then, there were the comments Wickham heard from people he'd known in high school.

He was known there for his artistic ability and old school chums kept asking if he was doing anything with that talent.

#### **An educated guess**

Wickham took a leap of faith and enrolled at Kendall - a gutsy move for a family man who knew he wouldn't be contributing much income for the three years it would take to get a degree.

"We were going into debt and I was about ready to just quit," he said. "But then I made the president's list - straight 4.0's in my first semester. That was the encouragement I needed."

Graduating with a degree in illustration, Wickham went to work for Adams Outdoor Advertising. Starting as a billboard painter, he later found his way into the art department and eventually became the creative director.

That's where he met Mary Heightchew, who began working for him as an intern and later became Adams' creative director in Ann Arbor.

"(Wickham) taught me everything," Heightchew said. "He's an awesome guy who is amazing at what he does."

### **On their own**

Wickham and Heightchew talked about starting their own company for a long time before actually starting Zoot! in 2003.

Wickham's son, Sean, came to Zoot! to intern in late 2004.

Like Heightchew, he said he learned a lot from his dad.

"The biggest thing he taught me was to keep it simple," Sean said. "Keep it to the bare essentials."

But there's room for hyperbole, too.

Their company, Zoot!, takes its name from a jazz musician's term that means "to exaggerate."

In a sense, he said, advertising does that, too. It amplifies a client's strengths.

Among the ads Wickham has done that are currently on display are billboard ads for Kositchek's, the Kellogg Center's State Room and a Lansing Public School campaign to prevent high school drop outs.

"Lansing was like our gallery," Wickham said.

"I wanted to fill it with good-looking stuff."

## **The Grand Rapids Press**

February 27, 2006

### **Arts Jam nets \$20,000 for schools**

GRAND RAPIDS -- The fifth annual Arts Jam fundraiser, benefiting Grand Rapids Public Schools' music and art programs, generated record numbers Sunday afternoon at St. Cecilia Music Society.

A sellout crowd of 600 helped raise nearly \$20,000. The money came from ticket and auction sales, as well as individual and corporate contributions.

About \$6,000 was from sponsor donations, according to Janelle Mahlmann, program coordinator for Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids.

The previous high tally was in 2004, with \$17,000 donated. Last year's event raised \$14,000.

The silent auction featured nearly 100 wooden sculptures decorated, detailed and donated by professional community artists, Kendall College faculty and GRPS teachers and high school students. The highest bid topped \$200 for a single sculpture.

"Art and P.E. and music are what kept me in school," said KEC Mayfield Middle School art teacher Karen Sitron Haight, 59, attending the event. "And now I love doing what I'm doing."

Mayor George Heartwell was emcee for the event, which featured musical performances from local acts Potato Moon, Troll For Trout, Edye Evans Hyde, Laura Aremnta, Bill Vits, Elgin Vines, Rob Dattilo and Freddy DeGennaro.

"High school was a good foundation for what I do today," said the 51-year-old DeGennaro, a former Central High School student. "It's a privilege to give back a little bit.

"The more we give, the more we all benefit," he added.

One of the event's highlights featured a 15-minute performance by Ottawa Hills High School's Salt and Pepper Ensemble, an audition-based choir, directed by Vanessa Allen.

Sixteen-year-old Erica Soto, a first soprano, said she "couldn't imagine" what school would be like without choir.

"It's helped me academically, socially. It's just something that's helped me grow as a person," she said.

Said director Allen: "The arts in general brings out a part of the person -- the creative side -- that brings out the whole person."



The City High School band and Creston High School Jewell Tones also performed at the event. GRPS supporters, friends, family members and music fans came out to support the cause, including Grand Rapids City Commissioner Rosalynn Bliss, 30, who said Potato Moon is one of her favorite bands.

"I'm just a huge supporter of the Grand Rapids Public Schools," Bliss said. "I believe it's important. I have a great affection for the arts."

"(Arts Jam) is one way we can be supportive."

## **The Grand Rapids Business Journal**

February 1, 2006-April 30, 2006

### **Granger Construction Co. has been in business for 45 years**

And although Granger is no stranger to the local market, last year was a highlight year for the family-owned and operated general contracting firm in Grand Rapids, as the company took two actions that appreciably raised its presence here.

First, the Lansing-based Granger chose Grand Rapids last summer for its regional office as the firm settled in at 940 Monroe Ave. NW, and then immediately selected Jim Conner as its regional manager for West Michigan.

Granger Construction Co. President Glenn Granger said Conner was picked to lead the company's effort here because of his experience, which totals more than 13 years in a number of different positions within the industry.

"Previously, he has served as a manager, estimator and engineer on construction projects for clients such as Pfizer Pharmaceutical, Sparrow Health System, Detroit Metro Airport and National City Bank," said Granger. "He is a young man with a lot of energy, and the timing was right for him.

Second, not long after Granger established its office here, the company was awarded its first major local contract - a \$10 million subcontract to do the concrete work on the new Alticor Inc. owned JW Marriott hotel being built downtown.

Granger said his firm won the contract because of the numerous construction projects it has directed that required mid-rise concrete frames, which are crucial elements of the hotel's 23-story blueprint.

"We've really built an organization that can understand the complexity of tower and high-rise construction. There is a parking ramp that has a pretty sophisticated forming technology and post-tensioning onto a high-rise hotel. It's got a lot of complexity. It will frame the success, if you will, of the whole development." he said.

"It's kind of neat that we can start to make our way with renewed energy in the West Michigan market in Grand Rapids through this prominent hotel."

The company had another major project last year that wasn't too far from Grand Rapids, as the firm directed the construction of the \$42 million Health and Human Services Building on the Kalamazoo campus of Western Michigan University. The nearly 200,000-square-foot structure has a freestanding laboratory and office building connected by a four-story atrium that contains a garden and a pool.

Granger also directed construction of a \$36 million project at Hope College. The work included putting up a new 85,900-square-foot structure and renovating the Peale Science Center, a 72,800-square-foot building that opened in 1973. The new center is home to five of the college's departments.

Over the last 15 years, Granger Construction has completed nearly \$500 million worth of construction projects across West Michigan - a notable figure that was likely unthinkable when the company's executives first rolled up their sleeves in their cozy office on South Cedar Street in Lansing more than 45 years ago.

It was 1959 when Glenn Granger's father, Alton, his grandfather, Keith, and a pair of uncles formed Keith Granger & Sons.

A year later the business became known as Granger Construction.

"For some period they competed against a firm called Granger Brothers, which was also family-initiated on the west side of Lansing. They slowly gravitated toward doing more and more work on the campus of Michigan State, and later with all the work here in town with the auto company," said Granger of the push General Motors Corp. made into Lansing.

"They kind of grew themselves into an operation of a significant size and capability.

They initiated a trash-hauling operation. they bought a dump truck and did some hauling for some other folks. In time they added a few more trucks and had an opportunity to buy a landfill, and now they're a fairly significant player in the regional waste-hauling and landfill business."

The waste-hauling operation was separated from the construction firm in 1990. Today, Alton and Glenn Granger run the construction business, which has averaged \$250 million worth of projects across the state for the past several years and now has more than 200 employees. Cousins and uncles direct the waste-hauling enterprise.

Granger said his father has been most responsible for the company's longevity. It's an achievement that serves as a testament to his father's business skills, but an accomplishment that was put into motion through the values that Alton instilled in the firm from the beginning. Granger felt the key value, the one that largely underlies the company's lengthy and successful run, came from a simple canon that his father learned as a youngster.

"My dad is an incredibly gifted businessman. He knows how to make money, but also how to provide value.

But I think his belief in the Golden Rule treating everybody as you would like to be treated - which is his way of summarizing and simplifying everything - has prevailed.

(The company) never treated a customer as somebody to make a buck off. There has never been litigation against a customer," said Granger, who has been with the firm for the past 75 years.

"The relationships that we've had with our subcontractors and our associates and our architects has always been at a premium. A relationship has almost been more important than the product or the building. I think that is a value that has been a part of everybody who has worked here."

Granger arrived in Grand Rapids with the intention of investing heavily in the market, and an impressive resume of projects it has completed in West Michigan. A check of the company's construction background also reveals it has built a good number of facilities for health care and higher education, two areas that are almost certain to hike demand for more brick-and-mortar projects here.

Locating its first regional office in the Monroe North Business District seems like a good fit for Granger, once the company gets better known throughout the city.

"I think the difference for us is that we recognize we need to contribute to Grand Rapids prior to being engaged in some of the developments downtown," said Granger from his office in Lansing.

"So, in large measure, our initiative in the office there is building a business as part of the community that can also give back to the community, to participate in a marketplace where people like to do business with their friends. And that is what we're working toward."

## **The Grand Rapids Business Journal**

February 1, 2006-April 30, 2006

### **New Indoor Water Park Surfaces At Double JJ Ranch**

Though the sounds of children laughing and splashing in the indoor water park at the Double JJ Ranch and Golf Resort are months away, President Bob Lipsitz, Vice President Joan Lipsitz and their contractor John Wheeler, president and CEO of Rockford Construction, have been hard at work planning the water park.

The park is set to open in November. Hooker DeJong Architects and Engineers of Muskegon designed the plan, which has a mining theme. Those involved want to ensure the park's success before a single drop of chlorinated water is put in the specially balanced, 84-degree man-made environment in which it will be housed.

"It's a challenge because the building is so large, volume-wise," Wheeler said. Wheeler said the planning process took about double the time of an average construction job.

Plans needed to include details such as water chemical balance water pressure and temperature and nonslip surfaces to ensure safety, not to mention construction of the water rides, action river and surrounding arcades, stores and restaurants.

"The only thing you can't do inside this building is fish," Wheeler joked.

Safety is a main priority in the construction of the water park and the connected convention center, Wheeler said.

"You have to educate yourself well before you go into these things," he said. "We've done an awful lot of research."

Rockford Construction, though it has worked on pools, has never before constructed a water park.

Wheeler said he hopes this will not be its last.

"It's a growing market," Wheeler said.

"We don't want to do something that's yesterday's news. We need to get the first one under our belts."

After months of planning, Bob and Joan Lipsitz are happy to see progress on the convention center and water park that make up the largest addition in Double JJ Ranch's 70-year history.

"Over the years we've grown and evolved," Bob Lipsitz said. "It became the next step."

The expansion includes an additional 100,000 square feet of indoor entertainment space, including the water park, a spa, arcade, restaurants, dinner theater and shopping.

"It just gives us a whole indoor entertainment venue," he said.

There will also be two phases of condominiums built, with the first to open in July-. The ranch has \$16.0 million available in real estate, "which, for Rothbury, is unheard of," Bob Lipsitz said.

"Real estate is our future," he said. The units will be condo/hotels that owners can use themselves and also rent out through the ranch. The ranch will handle the rentals and all the amenities a hotel would, including linens and housekeeping services. Owners decide when they would like to use their condo and if they would like to rent it out when they are not there.

"It allows somebody to have a second home and invest in real estate," Bob Lipsitz said.

The ranch has 250 units now and will have close to 400 after construction is finished.

The first 68 condos will be available in July, followed by the opening of the water park in November, and the conference center and next 50 condos in 2007.

There will also be five new restaurants and four new shops.

Joan Lipsitz said the ranch is always changing, but this is by far the largest expansion on the 2,000-acre property. The couple bought the ranch in 1988 after moving from Detroit.

Opening the ranch to families in 1998 worked well for the resort, Bob Lipsitz said.

"After a 70-year-history as an adult-only facility, our fastest-growing aspect is definitely families," he said.

Joan Lipsitz agreed with the changing direction of the ranch.

"The adult market isn't the market for us," she said. "The family vacation is very important."

Because of the growing family vacation market and the hope to expand the ranch's "shoulder seasons," Joan Lipsitz said the expansion is well-timed and a great addition for families, convention groups and anyone looking for a getaway during the colder months.

"It was just a perfect time to offer more and more for that population," she said. "I think it will be extremely exciting."

Bob Lipsitz said he was also excited about being the first resort to build an indoor water park in the area.

“It’s kind of cool to be in the forefront.” Cool... even though the water will be warm!