

Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation Newsletter

Volume Two

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Award-Winning Glass Designer Robert Du Grenier

When the MTV-commissioned statue of Jackie Gleason as Ralph Cramden is placed in Manhattan's Port Authority Bus Terminal this summer, it will have a distinctive Vermont connection. The statue, an homage to the long running "Honeymooners" TV series, now owned by MTV, was designed in Townshend by world-class glass sculptor and local manufacturer Robert Du Grenier.

If Du Grenier's name isn't a household word, his products might be. He has designed and brought to manufacture glass bottles for a number of popular companies. His creations are a virtual "Who's Who" of the perfume industry and include Susan Lucci Invitation, Kiss & Tell, Faberge and Stiletto by Charles Jourdan.

The next time MTV holds its movie awards look carefully at the TV screen. The award the stars walk away with, a simulated popcorn box, was designed and produced in Townshend. Crest Studios, Du Grenier's production facility, is a small factory tucked inside the circa 1800s farmhouse he purchased for his company. The building, which also is home to a glass and antique shop, straddles Route 30 south of the Town Common.

"The key to our being in Vermont is technology."

Du Grenier, along with his wife Katherine, has been producing his unique glass products in Vermont since 1997. The couple said the key to their being located in Vermont while they work with a worldwide customer base is technology. The ease of digital communications allows them to send and receive scans of design ideas as well as e-mail. This digital network makes it possible for them to maintain their design and production facility in this very rural community.

The Du Greniers were able to move their business offices and manufacturing facility from Manhattan to Townshend because of help they received from the Brattleboro Development Credit Corp. and Central Vermont Power Corp.

"We needed to find alternate space after our rent in Manhattan skyrocketed said Du Grenier. The couple had long had a residence in Jamaica and was familiar with the Brattleboro area.

At a Manhattan trade show in 1996, they met a CVPS representative and through him, they were introduced to Bill McGrath at BDCC.

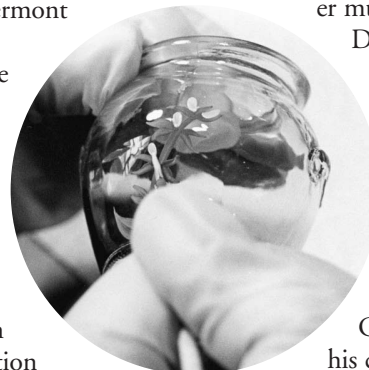
"BDCC helped us with VEDA loans and helped us set up a satellite office in the Cotton Mill Incubator Building,"

Du Grenier said. Later, he added, BDCC and CVPS also helped with the Act 250 application process.

Relocation for a glass manufacturer must be taken in steps, said Du Grenier. The company trained four Vermonters in their process for hand-painting glass at its Crest Studios division at the Cotton Mill site.

After six months at the Cotton Mill Du Grenier was able to move his company to the farmhouse he had converted into offices and a production facility.

Today the company employs 17 people, making it the third largest employer in the town. From this site, the company continues to create its unique and award-winning glass products. Recently Du Grenier won the 1999



Hand-painted glass is a specialty of Robert du Grenier's Crest Studios.

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Company News

Do you have news of interest to the Brattleboro area business community? Has your company expanded, introduced a new product, won an award?

Send your information to:

Newsletter editor, Brattleboro Development Credit Corp., 76 Cotton Mill Hill, Brattleboro, VT 05301.

Or fax it to us 257-0294 or email us BDCC@sover.net

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

News From BDCC

By Bill McGrath

I meet people regularly who ask what the BDCC's role in the local economy is. I thought I'd take time in the column to explain our purpose.

Since 1954, the BDCC has been helping local businesses in a variety of ways. And, over the past 46 years, our responsibilities have greatly expanded.

First, and foremost, we work with businesses to arrange financing packages. We can assemble as many as six financing sources for a specific plan aimed at assisting either an existing or new businesses seeking financial aid for expansion purposes.

We can aid in a site search. Businesses with a specific site requirement, either land or buildings, should contact us. We have an extensive database of sites and will build a list of several options in the area with as little as 48 hours notice. We work with local realtors and business brokers, and we have long term relationships with local building and property owners.

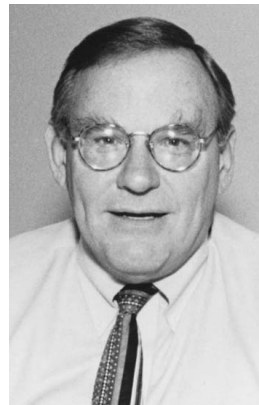
We assist existing businesses as they seek to expand. We help with permit process issues, financing, and in working with the sometimes-complicated web of local government rules and regulations.

We help establish employment-training programs. We can arrange specific programs, and whenever possible help employers to implement them at their site.

We assist towns with economic development strategies. This may include re-writing town plans to incorporate economic development issues of new business recruitment and the growth of existing businesses.

We operate an incubator facility at the Cotton Mill, one that encompasses 145,000 square feet of space.

Most recently we have become the



conduit businesses will use to obtain the business tax credits under Act 71 passed in 1999. Act 71 relates to education taxation and education financing. This act includes a package of financial incentives designed to stimulate quality job growth explained here:

1. Payroll Tax Credits. A firm may receive credit against income tax liability equal to a percentage of its increased payroll cost.

2. Small Business Investment Tax Credit. A company can receive a credit in the amount equal to five to 10 percent of its investments.

3. Workforce Development Tax Credit. A credit can be issued in the amount of 10 percent for qualified training, education, and workforce development.

4. Export Tax Credit. This incentive is favorable to exporters encouraging Vermont businesses that export to declare a greater amount of taxable income in Vermont.

5. Research and Development Tax Credit. This is a credit of 10 percent of qualified research and development expenditures.

Act 71 also provides for Property Tax Stabilization Agreements. Such agreements are made between a municipality and a business to stabilize taxes. The act also provides for sales and use tax exemptions. Please call us with questions.

Local WIB A Model For Vermont

The Connecticut River Valley Workforce Investment Board (WIB) gets kudos for being the first of the state's 12 WIBs to compile its Education & Training plan.

"Our plan has become the statewide model," said WIB co-chair Peter Hayward.

Hayward works out of the Alliance For Lifelong Learning Office located at the Cotton Mill in Brattleboro. The local WIB, comprised of an all-volunteer committee with no paid staff, encompasses southern Windsor County and all of Windham County.

The WIBs were created in 1996 to be the voice of business in the areas of

education and training. They are authorized to identify workforce education and training needs and to coordinate the delivery of programs that can meet them, said Hayward.

The recently completed (October 1999) plan identified 11 major and support industries in the area. It looked at what it would take to make these industries high skilled and well paid on the competitive world market, said Hayward.

Highlights of problems identified by the plan said Hayward, showed:

- The difficulty employers face in the very competitive job market in attracting employees with basic literacy and work ethic skills.

- Also, the need for training facilities at employment sites.

- The plan shows that employers need to be willing to invest money in

retraining and maintaining employee skill levels.

- And, there is need for greater collaboration between education service providers and employers.

"The WIB is proactive in trying to get industrial groups and education providers together to design needed training, and to provide training," said Hayward.

"Employers need to send their employees and pay for the training," he added.

According to Hayward, the WIB is here to "point employers to the correct resources."

The plan issued last October is not the final one from the WIB. At least two more updates will be issued, said Hayward.

To learn more about the WIB and how to participate call the Springfield Regional Development Corp. (802) 885-3061 or the Alliance for Lifelong Learning (802) 258-2255.



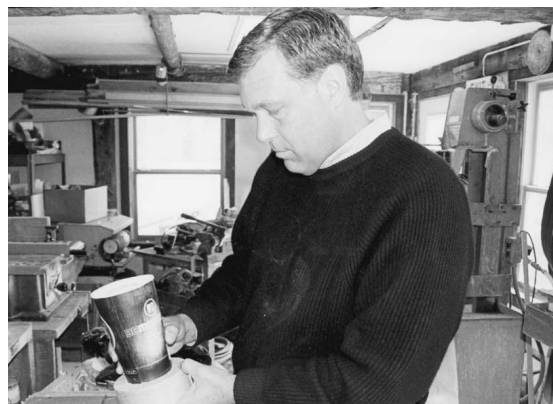
WIB
co-chair
Peter
Hayward.

Du Grenier

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Package of the Year Award from Food & Drug Packaging Magazine for its innovative design of the Kiss & Tell bottle and carton. The bottle is unique in that it is a bottle-in-a-bottle design. The company holds a worldwide patent on the design.

(Robert Du Grenier Associates,
365-4400,
www.dugrenier.com)



Robert Du Grenier with an MTV award produced at Crest Studios

Germany

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In his work toward recruiting businesses to Windham County, McGrath said he spoke to three companies who expect to visit this area this summer.

In summing up the German visit, McGrath was up beat. "This is our first visit and, on the surface, the results are extremely good."

McGrath Visits German Manufacturing Show

BDCC executive director Bill McGrath attended the Manufacturer's Hanover Show in Hanover, Germany on March 17-25.

This week-long event is the world's largest manufacturing show. As many as 15,000 manufacturers from around the world gather here to exhibit their wares and press the flesh while seeking customers and other business alliances for their products.

"The show is huge," said McGrath. "There is 5.5 million feet of exhibition space at the 120 acre site. "I wore out a pair of shoes," he quipped.

This year 720,000 people attended the show. McGrath was part of the four-person Vermont contingent.

In his role as BDCC head, McGrath represent two local companies, Janos Technology of Townshend and GS Precision in Brattleboro.

Janos Technology produces a wide

variety of highly specialized infrared optical lenses. GS Precision is a machining company.

"We've developed a cluster of high tech companies in Vermont," said McGrath. "We went to Germany to promote the advancement of those companies by forming strategic alliances with other companies from other parts of the world.

"Janos and GS are parts manufacturers which fits in well with the cluster idea," said McGrath. In Europe, he explained, clusters are a popular way of doing business. The cluster concept involves similar companies that work together in various aspects of their business. A typical cluster will hire a director to represent all the members. The cluster then works on issues of labor, parts acquisition and alliance creation.

McGrath said the first part of his trip was devoted to forming the strategic

alliances. He then worked to recruit businesses to Windham County.

"We met with ten people representing clusters from the UK, Germany and Switzerland," said McGrath. These clusters ranged in size from 4,000 to 75,000 members.

The potential for doing business looks good, he said. "Each one said there can be some type of alliance between our Vermont companies and them."

The companies McGrath spoke with were all extremely interested in forming a relationship with a US company, he said. "The US dollar is strong that means their prices are dropping. They view the U.S. as an extremely large market," he explained.

In all, McGrath met with a total of 38 companies interested in some form of alliance with GS Precision or Janos Technology. Most interested are companies located in the former East Germany.

"In each case I'm bringing back six to seven leads for each company," he said.

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