



Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation Newsletter

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Vermont Plumbing Supply At The Book Press

Have you looked at your toilet lately? Probably not in any clinical way, but perhaps you should. David Teece at Vermont Plumbing Supply and Degrees of Comfort says toilets are changing as American manufacturers introduce more European designs to their models.

Teece is an expert on plumbing and heating products. His company, Premier Supply Group, is based in Northampton but has had a branch in Vermont since 2004. This May Teece opened a Degrees of Comfort showroom at the Book Press building to offer advanced plumbing and heating appliances to the public in southeast Vermont.

With the new branch, one of five the company operates, Teece is looking to expand the distribution of plumbing and heating products into the Lebanon and Keene markets.

Currently there are five employees at the Book Press facility and that will soon expand. Degrees of Comfort showroom is open 10-4 Tuesday through Saturday. With its five branches the company employs 50. A second showroom is located in W. Hatfield. The company does in excess of \$20 million in annual sales. "We are small and have to fight the pricing from big competitors like Home Depot and Lowes," said Teece.

Teece is proud of his new Degrees of Comfort showroom. It is opened to the public and contractors. He says plumbing is "a world wide industry with



David Teece (rear) with the crew at Vermont Plumbing at the Book Press building, from left to right John Jarvis, Dan Kemp, and Shawn Knight.

advanced technology and products from Japan and Europe."

"People want more efficient and technologically advanced products especially in heating," says Teece. "Europe is way ahead of the US due to the high cost of energy there."

The products displayed at the showroom highlight European influences. "They go for longer lasting products," says Teece. The products here are "mid to high end." He categorized box store plumbing suppliers as "tending to be low

end."

Teece says being at the Book Press in Brattleboro is good for his business.

"We're a cornerstone in the redevelop-

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Company News

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

Send your information to:

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From the Executive Director

Welcome to the summer 2005 issue. As you have read in our lead article, there is much going on at the Book Press building. This is an interesting property for BDCC. Our organization came into existence in 1955 primarily to help finance its construction and then 45 years later, in 2000, we purchased it when Quebecor closed down operations. Vermont Plumbing Supply is one of 22 tenants occupying 62 percent of the building. Of course a building of this size requires time to fully reoccupy once the original tenant has left and we are working hard to achieve that goal.

We are pursuing many types of potential tenants; especially those who might take advantage of the building's pending foreign trade zone status. To this end we are working with JoAnn Hollis the state recruitment specialist and Ariani Monti the state retention specialist with the Department of Economic Development.

For BDCC and others to fill empty commercial space in the area we must target appropriate businesses. David Teece is a good example of a person who views Brattleboro and the area as a place fertile for his business.

My experience shows me there are people looking to live and work here who then figure out how to make that happen. To attract future employers and retain the ones we have we've got to make Brattleboro, and the surrounding area, an exciting place. We need to maintain and improve the quality of our schools, recreational opportunities and social and arts activities.

I believe that the future of our area's economy lies in attracting young entrepreneurs. Job growth in Vermont



and Windham County will come from what I call "relentless incrementalism." By this I mean many companies adding small numbers of jobs.

Among the economic issues that continually crop up is how our area deals with large chain store

development. We continue to struggle with an appropriate response to this issue. There is a natural tension that occurs between local small storeowners and the national chains. The dilemma is whether to embrace and control those developments or actively fight their relocation here. The Putney Road Business Association has been very active and productive in addressing a long-term vision for the road, which remains one of the few growth areas in the region.

On July 11, BDCC hosted a meeting with Speaker of the House Gaye Symington and President Pro Tem of the Senate Peter Welsh. Of interest to our members were health care access, funding and health care reform. The discussions were open and candid with an opportunity for everyone present to express their views. Speaker Symington said she would continue to work towards a health care legislation program in the second half of the biennium. We also discussed energy, especially Vermont Entergy, and the future of this important player in Vermont's power generation.

BDCC PROFILE: John Meyer Treasurer

John Meyer has seen many changes in BDCC in his nearly 30-year stint as treasurer. In those years BDCC went from a non-profit with limited assets and no employees to a major economic development organization in southeast Vermont.

Meyer, a CPA, is a partner in Pieciak & Company, PC. The accounting firm is located at 10 Park Place with four satellite offices and 40 employees.

Meyer, 60, grew up in Wilmington, graduated from St. Lawrence University and received an MS and MBA from Northeastern University.

He first joined BDCC in 1976. "When I first became involved we were leasing several buildings including the Book Press to major companies," he remembers. At that time, BDCC had limited assets, no employees and a total

volunteer board.

In the 1980s BDCC hired an executive director and undertook the development of the Exit One Industrial Park, "which substantially changed the finances requiring extensive borrowing and extensive expenditures on the industrial park."

"We became a highly leveraged non-profit," he recalled. He credits the "active board of directors and great cooperation from the Town of Brattleboro," in helping to acquire the industrial building at the Cotton Mill. "We were able to bring ourselves into a strong financial position by the end of the 1990s."

The Cotton Mill acquisition helped BDCC financially and provided "a great transition into this period of small employers rather than the bigger

companies that we had attracted in the past."

As he looks into the future Meyer foresees BDCC continuing to attract smaller companies and start-ups. However, he notes, "we are seeing that as companies grow and thrive they outgrow Brattleboro and move elsewhere which is unfortunate."

Why do some companies leave town? He points to the small population, lack of flat land to develop on, and difficulty in getting permits, and the perception of a difficult political climate for business.

As to the near term future, Meyer says BDCC will "continue to try to increase the occupancy in the Book Press building with an eye on companies that create good jobs. And we are working hard to improve the overall economy in Southeastern Vermont."

Creative Economy Symposium: Acting Locally

Creative minds solving the challenges of the creative economy:

A focus on Southeastern Vermont

BRATTLEBORO VERMONT, SEPTEMBER 12 –13 2005

What does the Creative Economy look like in a small Vermont community? What are the challenges to its growth? How can we help it thrive? These are the themes of the Symposium being organized by the Arts, Manufacturing, Commercial, and Educational organizations of the Brattleboro area. The Symposium will focus on the greater Brattleboro area with input from regional participants who help drive the creative economy.

Keynote speaker Monday evening, Sept 12 is Bill Ivey of the Curb Center for Arts and Public Enterprise and former head of the National Endowment for the Arts speaking on "Creativity and the Public Interest". Bill Ivey is appearing as the first speaker of Marlboro College's year-long Monday Night Lecture Series on Creativity.

Tuesday 9:00-4:00 will include presentations by Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, President Marlboro College and arts advisor to former President and Mrs. Clinton; Paul Costello, Executive Director, Vermont Council on Rural Development; and a panel of local leaders in manufacturing, commerce, arts, and education.

The Symposium will build on the recently published study "Advancing Vermont's Creative Economy" available through Vermont Council on Rural Development: vcrd@sover.net, 802-828-6024. Questions: dcox@sover.net.

Vermont Plumbing Supply

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ment of the Bookpress. We didn't want to be downtown and we're not a boutique. We want trades people to find us, we're a destination store."

By being an anchor tenant Teece says he got in on the ground floor and there are good expansion capabilities and extensive parking for customers as well as easy access to the I-91 and Northampton.



David Teece at the Degrees of Comfort showroom in the Book Press building.

"The Book Press is a good place and I'm very comfortable," says Teece. "Structurally its good, and in a few years this will be full."

Brattleboro is a target area, says Teece. "It's not a sleeper."

"Festival 05301" will hit Brattleboro this fall. Starting September 30 and lasting through October 2005, Festival 05301 is a marketing collaboration of events, taking advantage of regional advertising, Festival05301.org web presence and the inherent buzz of Brattleboro during foliage. Highlighting arts, business, industry, education is the goal. Watch for details or call Brattleboro Arts Initiative at 254-1109.



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