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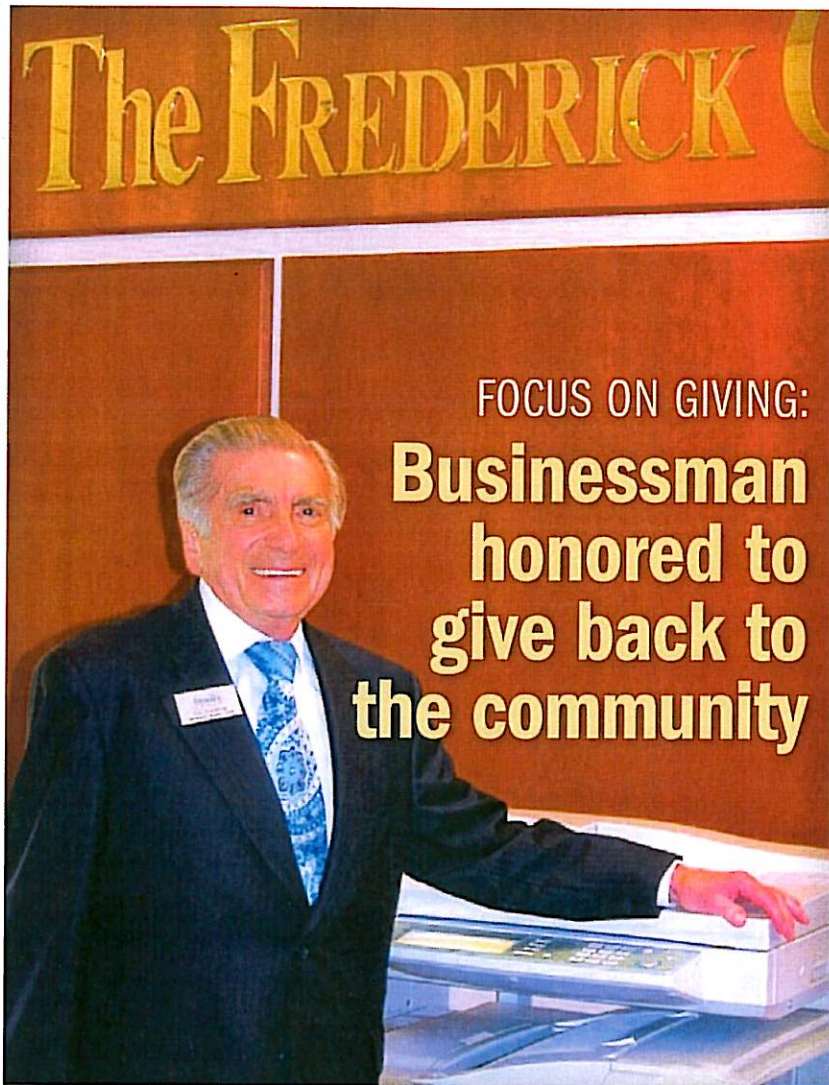


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FOCUS ON GIVING:
Businessman honored to give back to the community

By KATHERINE SCHNEIDER
katherines@lvb.com

A Lehigh Valley real estate legend will be formally recognized this fall for his 52-year dedication to the region.

Don Frederick, of Principal Investments and The Frederick Group, has been chosen by the March of Dimes of Northeastern Pennsylvania as its Real Estate Individual of the Year for 2012.

The real estate broker will be honored, along with "Project of the Year" – St. Luke's Hospital Anderson

Campus – at the March of Dimes 19th Annual Commercial and Industrial Real Estate Awards special breakfast event Oct. 19, at the Best Western Lehigh Valley Conference Center in Bethlehem.

"I'm humbled by such an honor," Frederick told Lehigh Valley Business from his Allentown office.

The award is given to "an outstanding individual, company or entity whose commercial and industrial

PHOTO/KATHERINE SCHNEIDER

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Developers of \$100M shopping center nearing construction start

By JENNIFER L. RODGERS
Special for Lehigh Valley Business

Developers of Hamilton Crossings, a \$100 million proposed shopping center that has caught the eye of big-name retailers like Costco Warehouse, are bucking the trend in today's listless commercial real estate market and moving forward with their vision.

Staten Island developer Tim Harrison and The Goldenberg Group of Montgomery County have proposed a mall, to be modeled after the Promenade Shops in Center Valley, on about 55 acres located on both sides

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Merchants crank up customer volume with special incentives

By JENNIFER TROXELL WOODWARD
Special for Lehigh Valley Business

Most businesses have incentive or rewards programs to build customer loyalty or attract new patrons. But lately it seems that some companies are stepping up their game with hard-to-ignore offers.

Sears Holding Corp., for instance, which has Sears retail locations in the Lehigh Valley, just launched SearsVacations.com, a travel website that allows customers to

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CHANNEL SERVING

PBS39 CEO Tim Fallon offers a look inside the Public Broadcasting studio at SteelStacks in Bethlehem and discusses plans for raising extra revenue through production facility rentals.

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put their vacations on layaway. Unlike its in-store layaway program, the company said there is no initiation fee for the website's layaway plan.

"You do not need to know when or where you want to travel. It's considered an open-ended ticket, and you have up to 18 months to pay for the trip, whether it's by making weekly, monthly or whatever scheduled payment plan you choose," said Laurie Bowden, vice president of International Cruise and Excursions Inc. (ICE), the company that Sears has partnered with to handle SearsVacations.com.

There's no short supply of grocery stores, eateries, clothing shops and gas stations offering loyalty cards and reward points to returning customers. The words "cash back" and "buy back" have become benchmark phrases in reference to customer experience.

In a less-than-scientific survey, this reporter placed a few calls to various Lehigh Valley merchants to see what they are doing to retain customers and draw new business.

Wegmans Food Markets, a grocery chain with several Lehigh Valley locations, was recently ranked No. 1 in supermarkets, according to a survey posted on ConsumerReports.org.

Jo Natale, director of media relations for the store, said that Wegmans focuses on "meeting customer needs" rather than building customer loyalty.

"We like to think our customer service is unlike any other," said Natale, reporting that Wegmans Allentown store recently decided to go the route of other Wegmans' locations and expand its store to include a pub where customers can buy beer. She said construction has begun and is expected to wrap by early next year.

Wegmans most recent summer incentives include an announcement that stores are freezing prices on over 60 everyday products until the end of August.

"We publish a seasonal magazine and mail it to our loyal customers, we have stands in the store where customers can sample food, and we go a step above that by holding grilling events at the store and hosting cookbook authors periodically," said Natale.

Shopping Spree

According to the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley's website, Wegmans was scheduled to hold a three-minute shopping spree worth \$1,000.00 in groceries at its Nazareth store last week. The cart jockey was Mary Beth Gerancher of Breinigsville, a PPL employee, who received the shopping spree as a prize for donating \$260 or more to the United Way.

It appears that plenty of companies are offering chances to win shopping sprees and free goods to gain new customers or award dedicated clients.

At Lehigh Valley Mall, Amanda Johnson, marketing director, reported that current promotions at the mall include a summer giveaways of a \$750 and a \$1,000 shopping spree.

Aaron's Inc., a lease-to-own furniture and electronics retailer, with stores in the Lehigh Valley, is advertising a \$2,000 shopping spree sweepstakes on its website, www.aarons.com.

Natalie Laboy, a sales associate at the Aaron's store in Bethlehem, reported that the shopping spree is detailed online, and at present, the store is holding its annual Christmas in July event.

"Customers receive a \$50 gift card to spend on their next visit when they take advantage of our rent-to-own products," said Laboy.

In Center Valley, The Promenade Shops at Saucon Valley is not holding a shopping spree at present, but marketing coordinator Melissa DiLazaro said that the lifestyle shopping center will get a crowd, regardless, with its annual summer concert series held at the amphitheater at the Promenade site.

"It is every Friday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in June

and July, and it's our sixth year doing this," said DiLazaro. "We get about 250 spectators (and potential shoppers) for each concert."

Perhaps the biggest draw at the shopping complex this summer can be found at Rave Cinemas, she added.

During the summer months, Rave hosts a free Family Festival that showcases one movie a week on Tuesday and Wednesday morning from mid-June to mid-August.

"We have a free feature for the parents to bring their kids. The other week we showed, 'Happy Feet,' for instance... the festival has been running a few years now. We get 1,000 people or more each day, and as they come in, we open as many auditoriums as possible to

accommodate them," said Rave general manager Ed Hilliker.

Reward and Recognition

The free movie is a way for customers to see the value of Rave's performance, and bring them back for other features.


One Easton bike shop sees customer loyalty as one of the driving forces of its business.


About a month ago, Genesis Bicycles in Easton rolled out its Genesis Miles program, which is geared toward bike riders that participate in Genesis' group-riding events, such as a weekly ride to Downtown Easton for ice cream. Bikers ride free of charge and ice cream is paid for by Genesis.

"It's a reward and recognition program. Customers get one point for every mile they ride and when so many points are accumulated they receive a gift card to be used in our store," said Rob McVeigh, marketing and events coordinator for Genesis Bicycles.

Rewards programs are not a new thing for the 40-year-old bike shop. For several years, Genesis has also offered a preferred customers program. Any customer, purchasing a bike from the shop, will receive one year of service on the bike and discounted accessories for the next two years after the bike is purchased.

"These incentives definitely put us at an advantage with other bike shops in the area," said McVeigh.





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