

Letter from the Chamber Chairman

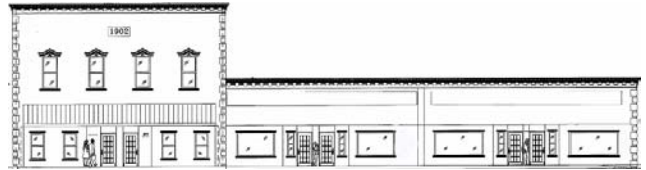
As I mentioned in my article last month, downtown revitalization is not only taking place in Napoleon, but in other areas of the county as well. I touched briefly on the changes that have been taking place in Ridgeville Corners and I would like to take this month's article to expand on that.

Some people may say I'm biased and perhaps I am, but since Ridgeville Corners has always been my home and is where my husband and I are raising our family, it is very exciting for me to see changes taking place. As my husband and I would take our evening walks through town we would often talk about what could be done with some of the empty buildings in town. I have always wanted to take one of those buildings and turn it into a thriving business. As anyone who loves living in a small town, we always seem to want to keep that small town flavor, but yet find a way to give back to the community that has supported us in the past whether it is through our businesses, community projects, celebrations, the fire department, our church or various fundraisers. It is through our community that we draw support.

So, it was very exciting to many of us in the Ridgeville community in January of 2006 when we heard that the previous Ann Furniture building had been purchased by Dave VonDeylen, President and Kevin Bock, Vice President/C.O.O. of Alex Products. Since that purchase of the building, we have seen many

changes in its appearance. The back part of the building has been torn down to make room for employee parking and the remainder is taking on a whole new look. Tri-State Solarcrete, LLC is handling the exterior construction and design, while

Alex Products is renovating the interior themselves. The plans are for Alex Products to use the facility for future office expansion. They do have 5600 sq ft that will be available for business rental. Plans are to house interns in an apartment located on the second floor above the office space. The project is to be completed this summer.



As a resident of Ridgeville Corners, I have seen a lot of growth and changes in Alex Products over the past several years. The company started in Alexandria County, North Carolina, hence the name "Alex". Shortly into production, the foundry burned to the ground. That's when Dexter Benecke moved the vent molds and the business to Ridgeville Corners. The name remained Alex Products as Dave partnered with Dexter in 1984, but the business started to change when Dave started a single employee machine shop in 1985. Today Alex Products has approximately 1,000 employees and three facilities in Northwest Ohio, with Ridgeville Corners being home to their original manufacturing site.

Using cutting-edge technology, Alex Products builds their own innovative tooling and equipment that produces best-in-class quality products making them the world class industry leading manufacturer of car seat frames; right here in Northwest Ohio. The success of Alex Products is directly related to their ability to build quality tooling that can handle the most challenging customer requests. Alex Products