

WHO'S WHO IN TOLEDO AREA LAW 2012

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Owens joins program to train workers



Owens Community College's Arrowhead Park Learning Center in Maumee

Owens Community College has been chosen along with 10 other academic institutions throughout the country to participate in a national program designed to train 10,000 baby boomers over the next three years for new jobs in healthcare, education, and social service.

The program is offered by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in cooperation with its member colleges and will ultimately comprise 100 colleges with special training programs for 50+ students. The Plus 50 Encore Completion Program is funded with a \$3.2 million grant to AACC provided by Deerbrook Charitable Trust.

"Owens Community College is honored to be chosen as one of the few community colleges in the country to participate in the American Association of Community

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Multi-brand area franchisee expands

With franchising back on the rise, many prospective business owners are looking to open multi-unit franchises in order to maintain a strong and focused relationship with the community and local consumers.

Brandon Yono, owner of a Ritter's franchise in Toledo, as well as three Five Guys restaurants (located in Toledo, Rossford, and Findlay) and a fourth opening in September (located in Lima), along with his brother, looked into between 50 and 70 franchises since 2002, finally finding the correct fit with Five Guys in 2009.

"We wanted to have a protected territory and the ability to grow into multiple locations," he explained. "Though Five Guys has 1,100 stores, it is still reputable and family-owned. The five guys and their father still oversee the day-to-day operations."

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Tecumseh Winery plans growth



Pentamere Winery in Tecumseh, Michigan, is planning an expansion with the goal of opening a second winery and storage facility on West Logan Street. The space is 6,600 square feet.

"Pending licensing from State and federal agencies, we will move ahead with phase one," explained operations manager Ed Gerten. "We will add drains, upgrade plumbing and electrical, and renovate the interior. Phase two will be the purchase and installation of additional equipment that will allow us to produce the two additional product lines."

Pentamere looks to invest approximately \$20,000 on the initial building renovations and a further \$20-30,000 on equipment purchases, such as product-handling and additional winemaking equipment.

The winery is currently located on Chicago Boulevard which, before

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Franchisee

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He opened Ritter's in December 2010.

"It worked out perfectly that the Ritter's is next door to Five Guys in Westgate Plaza," he stated. "They share a back door. We wanted an



Interior of Ritter's at Westgate

ice cream franchise to go with that location."

According to Gary Occhiogrosso, chief development officer and interim president for TRUFOODS, LLC, there are many positives in being a multi-branded franchisee. For example, there is no need to hire an additional bookkeeper or accounting individuals.

"You're capitalizing on your ability to garner real estate," he explained. "You may look at a piece of real estate and say, that's no good for my hamburger concept, but it's perfect for my frozen custard concept. It opens up the universe of available real estate."

Occhiogrosso also noted in a lot of cities franchise owners will branch out because of a saturated market.

"Even if they wanted to open more locations, they wouldn't be able to," he stated. "Here in New York, franchisors target operators who are in the sandwich business and the donut business because they recognize those two brands are saturated and operators are looking to grow." He explained some brands complement each other, while others are diverse, such as the pairing of Five Guys with Ritter's.

"It's very hectic," explained Yono. "I oversee all the operations and, between the two franchises, we have

a lot of operational issues such as something breaking or hiring new employees. We brought on another person to go between our stores to assist with training." He explained that multi-brand franchising has been a lot of trial and error.

"This is a people business, so anything could happen," stated Occhiogrosso. "An operator may find that the new brand is more difficult than the current brand. For example, if I'm operating a simple burger concept and I move into a casual dining concept, now I'm dealing with a wait staff and maybe a bar, which are elements new to the organization. A big challenge is to blend the organization and the brands to get up to speed."

He noted that when deciding on another brand, it should be in the same genre the franchisee is already operating in.

"I wouldn't be as successful if I am a multi-unit food service operator and I turn around and add an automotive component," he stated. "A person must be disciplined in recognizing what they're good at and building on that."

According to Occhiogrosso, an operator must also recognize the need in its current market. "If there is an absence of hamburger or ice cream places, I'd focus on those brands."

He added, "We met Brandon Yono and his brother a few years ago when they wanted to diversify from Five Guys. They were familiar with the Ritter's frozen custard brand and thought it would complement what they were already doing since they understand their market and multi-unit franchises."

Yono noted that the amount of investment for a Ritter's franchisee is situational depending on the store and other costs. "It could range from \$70,000 to \$250,000," he stated.

"Some stores are 2,000 square feet, others are circle stores with drive-thru's. There are a lot of options."

He continued, "I'm from Detroit, but spend most of my time here because of the businesses. The Toledo market is very similar to what we're used to. It's in the Midwest, still heavily reliant on the auto industry, and people are friendly."

Yono also explained that as the Westgate location is the first Ritter's in the Toledo area, most people are not familiar with the brand. "It's still catching on," he stated. "We get a lot of foot traffic from the Westgate Plaza from people who are curious to see what it is."

There are 31 Ritter's locations nationwide. The store serves 90 constantly changing flavors, offering three different flavors each day, plus chocolate and vanilla. The company has a loyalty program for members to get more traffic into the local store.

"Many franchisors seek out franchisees specifically for multi-branding," stated Occhiogrosso. "They look for multi-unit operators because they recognize someone who might own 25 units is probably successful in that market and knows that market. They see someone who is qualified operationally and financially."

"My advice for anyone looking to do multi-brand franchising is to get to know the people at the top and the people at the ground level," stated Yono. "Those are going to be the people who are making sure your business is running right and that you're following the standards of the company." He added, "You're investing in the people in that organization. Anyone can make a burger, but it's how they present it and how they do it."

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October 2 Fraser, Clemens, Martin & Miller, LLC
November 13 Purdue Law Offices, LLC
(second Tuesday due to election day)
December 4 MacMillan, Sobanski & Todd, LLC

2013 Schedule:

January 8 Fraser, Clemens, Martin & Miller, LLC
(second Tuesday due to New Year's Day)
February 5 MacMillan, Sobanski & Todd, LLC
March 5 Fraser, Clemens, Martin & Miller, LLC
April 2 Purdue Law Offices, LLC
May 7 MacMillan, Sobanski & Todd, LLC
June 4 Fraser, Clemens, Martin & Miller, LLC

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