

Timber Products of Iron Mountain earns U.P. small business award



Iron Mountain Main Street Photo

KIMBERLY SCHUSTER OF Hollow Tree Concepts gets ready to sell items for the Iron Mountain Farmer's & Artisans Market, which is held Saturdays through Oct. 1 from 8 a.m. to noon.

Strawberries, fire department featured at market Saturday

New vendors added at IM event

IRON MOUNTAIN — Early produce is now arriving at the Iron Mountain Farmers & Artisans Market, which runs every Saturday through Oct. 1 from 8 a.m. to noon.

"Come join us at our new location in front of the performance stage at the intersection of East Hughitt Street and Iron Mountain Street across from the Dickinson County Library. The market is managed and operated by Iron Mountain DDA/Main Street volunteers," organizers said.

Strawberries from Pelligrini's will also be available at the market for the last time this summer. The Iron Mountain DDA/MS will be selling them as a fund-raiser.

Special guest for the day will be the Iron Mountain Fire Department who will be on site with their Fire Safety House for educational purposes.

"We also wish to welcome new vendors — Kel-

ly Hayes, cupcakes; Chris Allen, silk flower arrangements and homemade aprons; and Chris Spigarelli, dry herbs and knit hats/scarves," a spokesperson said.

Continuing each week is Coffee with the Council, which will allow residents to talk with a different member of the City Council each week. Coffee for the month of July will be sponsored by Moose Jackson Café.

Volunteers will be on hand each week to sign up new vendors for the market. The cost for vendors is \$20 per week or \$60 for the season. Market bags and Italian cookbooks will also be available for sale.

Interested farmer or artist vendors wanting to participate in the market or citizens seeking additional information, please contact Iron Mountain DDA/Main Street at 774-8530 or visit www.ironmountaindowntown.com.

ESCANABA — Candy Lauk, owner of Timber Products of Iron Mountain Inc. along with staff members, Stacey Weecks and Ann Walker, were presented with the Best Small Business Award for the Upper Peninsula Region.

The 13 companies honored for the 2010 Best Small Business Awards were selected from over 16,000 companies the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC) provided with confidential counseling and training in 2010.

These companies are chosen based on their success in creating jobs, increasing sales, improving their business strategy and their involvement with the MI-SBTDC.

Candy Lauk is an example of an entrepreneur who was able to create a successful small business from an unforeseen opportunity.

Lauk began working for Timber Products in 1991 by helping with everyday bookkeeping activities. Timber Products is a long haul and LTL (Less-than-Truck-Load) trucking company that runs mainly Midwest, but is authorized in 48 states.

Their main loads include roll paper, castings, roofing granules and sawdust and they pride themselves in customer service.

When control of the company was given to Lauk after the previous owner left, she set out to save the business. In order to make the business more profitable expenses needed to be reduced and income needed to increase.

Tough choices were made including: wage and benefit reductions, renting out shop space and all unnecessary expenses eliminated or reduced. Customers were contacted and met with and customer service and rates



TIMBER PRODUCTS OF Iron Mountain Inc. received the Best Small Business Award for the Upper Peninsula region from the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center. From left, are Stacey Weecks, Candy Lauk (owner) and Ann Walker of Timber Products of Iron Mountain, along with Jim Beauchamp, a small business consultant with the center's Upper Peninsula region.

were discussed. Fortunately, no customers were lost.

The MI-SBTDC arranged for Lauk to meet with Jim Beauchamp, a small business consultant with the MI-SBTDC Upper Peninsula Region. Beauchamp met weekly with her and helped her learn how to manage both financial and personnel.

Cash flow charts were created, banks contacted (along with business counselor Robert Furno) goals were set, wages and employees discussed, time managed and many other changes occurred.

"I greatly appreciate Jim's knowledge and friendship," said Lauk.

Stacey Weecks and Ann Walker were also very instrumental in helping to rebuild this business. They worked many long hours, met with Beauchamp, shared ideas and covered the office needs while management was not there.

Over the past year, Timber Products' sales are up by

25 percent, employees have increased from 22 to 27 including four owner-operators, and several new customers have been added.

Timber Products has been able to survive in an extremely difficult environment with high fuel prices and tough economy. However, they have been able to maintain stability by accepting help and advice, working with customers and banks and by reducing costs in every way possible, and through determination, hard work, and a willingness to accept change.

"I want to thank all the dedicated Timber Products employees, the banks and Robert Furno who were willing to work with us, our customers who remained faithful, and especially MI-SBTDC consultant Jim Beauchamp for believing in us and for his on-going help and friendship," said Lauk.

"We are extremely honored and humbled to receive this award and know that

together with Jim and the MI-SBTDC, we will continue to work on maintaining or expanding beyond 25 jobs here in Michigan."

The Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center is the Feet on the Street providing counseling, training and market research for Michigan's new business ventures, existing small businesses, expanding new businesses, new technology companies, and innovators.

The MI-SBTDC is located at the Grand Valley State University, Seidman College of Business in Grand Rapids, Michigan. As host of the MI-SBTDC State Headquarters, the Seidman College of Business oversees the twelve-region MI-SBTDC network. Entrepreneurs and small business owners may access the services of their nearest MI-SBTDC by calling (616) 331-7480 or visiting www.misbtcd.org/upperpeninsula.

'Third Tuesday' family celebration to debut in downtown IM

Musical entertainment, bounce houses, movie

IRON MOUNTAIN — Third Tuesdays a family friendly summer celebration event is coming to downtown Iron Mountain on July 19.

The event will feature extended store hours, store discounts, art demonstrations and sales by local artist, inflatable bounce houses for children, live music and movie at dusk on the performance stage.

Three separate events will be held this summer on the Third Tuesday of July, August and September (weather permitting) with the majority of the events taking place from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

The Third Tuesday event is managed by the Iron Mountain DDA/Main Street Promotion Committee.

"Sales will be taking place all day with artists from I AM ART and Art Works Gallery and children games sponsored by Abundant Life Church beginning at 5 p.m.," said DDA/MS Manager Jonathan Ringel. "Our musical guest for the July 19 event will be DeJaBrew, a three piece band from Kenosha, Wisconsin which will start at 7 p.m. on the community per-

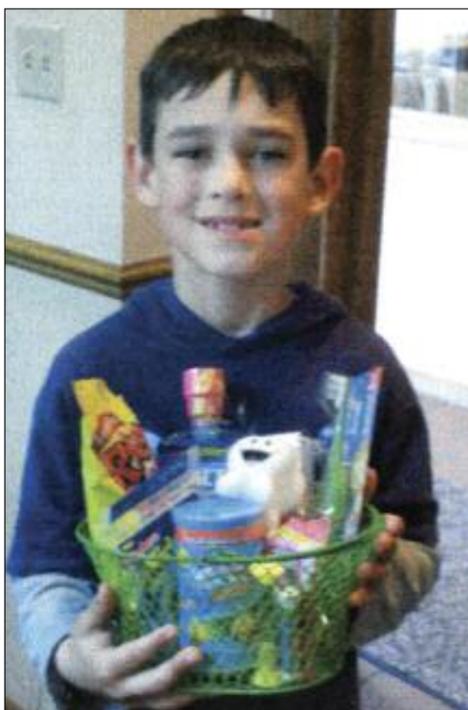
formance stage". Spiro's Downtown Restaurant will be featuring children friendly foods at their outdoor patio from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. for those interested in dining outside.

The Thomas Theatre Group will help to conclude the event through their sponsorship of a family friendly movie at dusk. The movie will be projected onto a screen placed on the community performance stage. Featured movie for the July 19 event will be "The Goonies."

"Persons are encouraged to bring their lawn chairs and snacks for the evening or bring takeout food from one of our local restaurants," said Debbie Gursky from Cuisine Art. "The Iron Mountain DDA/MS will be selling popcorn and water for a small fee. Donations for the event will also be accepted. We are looking forward to another great way to celebrate summer in our community."

Persons seeking additional information, please contact Iron Mountain DDA/Main Street at (906) 774-8530 or visit www.ironmountaindowntown.com.

'Big Day' basket



Santini Family Dentistry Photo

Santini Family Dentistry was a part of the Big Day for Little Kids event held recently at Iron Mountain Central School. In addition to having educational material, coloring pages, tattoos, free toothbrushes and free toothpaste, a contest was held to see who could guess how much dental floss was in a jar. Shown here is Tony Kralovec, the winner of a basket filled with a power toothbrush, fluoride rinse, a tooth brushing timer, sugar free ring pops, sugar free Hawaiian Punch and a lot more.

Research center to host annual field day July 23

CHATHAM — The Upper Peninsula Research Center (UPRC) will hold its annual field day Saturday, July 23.

The theme is "Focus on Efficiency."

The UPRC, located in Chatham, is part of Michigan State University (MSU) AgBioResearch, which has on-campus facilities and 14 outlying field stations located across Michigan that support the work of more than 300 scientists in six colleges at MSU: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Communication Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Natural Science, Social Science and Veterinary Medicine. The UPRC works with forages and bioenergy crops.

Field day activities consist of research plot tours at 10:30 a.m., including the new dairy-beef pilot project, alternative bioenergy crops for the Upper Peninsula, a three-year switchgrass trial and Roundup herbicide

effectiveness in corn. The plot tours will be repeated at 3:30 p.m.

"With the tough economic times Michigan is facing, the UPRC field day will help farmers increase their farming efficiency in the Upper Peninsula," said UPRC scientists and Extension forage specialist Doo-Hong Min. "It also gives the general public an opportunity to see the type of research taking place at the center."

The field day will also feature weed identification workshops on pastures and field crops; programs on artificial breeding; a talk on and tour of summer annual grazing crops, including Italian rye grass and MasterGraze corn; and wind anemometer tower results and wind energy possibilities.

No pre-registration is required to attend.

For more information, contact Paul Naasz at 906-439-5114 or email naasz@msu.edu.



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