

PROGRESS 2007

The Write Design: More than you think

OSKALOOSA — After serving almost seven years as Communications Director for the Oskaloosa Area Chamber and Development Group and working for five years in the composition and editorial departments of the Oskaloosa Herald, Pam Blomgren realized a need existed in the areas of project management, design work, and writing for businesses and individuals, so in the fall of 1998, she decided to open The Write Design.

"I discovered that there was a niche in this area for businesses and people, who perhaps didn't have those creative services within their business, to do things like write news releases, help with brochures, put together logos, but it took all that experience with all those other jobs in order for me to say, 'O.K. that's it, I'm going out on my own,'" said Blomgren.

Blomgren has helped area companies and individuals with their publications and, when applicable, utilized local businesses for professional printing services.

In addition to helping area businesses with their needs, The Write Design can help individuals with personalized family calendars and invitations, event programs, or even photo restoration.

"People want to preserve old slides or photographs. They want those photographic moments saved onto CDs or turned into DVD mini movies so photos aren't lost and can be shared. The Write Design now has the equipment to make this happen," said Blomgren.

While Blomgren remains true to the original focus of her business, recent equipment purchases and office upgrades are enabling The Write Design to once again expand its horizons and address a creative service need in the area.

"Probably within the last year, the biggest thing that I've started doing is taking those old cassette tapes and those old vinyl records and converting them to CDs for people," Blomgren said.

"CD players are very common in homes today; stereos

which play those old records are not," she added.

Blomgren does not have a strict limitation on what The Write Design will or will not work on when it comes to creative publications. "If it can be imagined, it can be created, and I'm willing to give it a shot," she said.

And if Blomgren can't help you with a project, she can help you find someone who can.

"I'm kind of that 'go to' person when you aren't quite sure where to go. If I can't help, I've had enough contacts through the years, locally, that I think I can find someone who will help you with whatever project you have, whether it's visual or whether it's written," said Blomgren.

The Write Design is a home-based business with regular Monday through Friday business hours. Blomgren can be reached by calling (641) 673-7533. More information and additional contact information can be found on her Web site: www.thewritedesign.biz.

Mahaska Hearing Aid Center celebrating 20th year

OSKALOOSA — The Mahaska Hearing Aid Center is celebrating its 20th year in business as it recently moved to a new location in Oskaloosa.

It was located at 212 N. Market St. Now, its new location is 714 A Ave. W. Mahaska Hearing Aid Center made the move in December 2006.

Owner Maria Martin says the center moved to the A Avenue West location to better serve her customers. Customers have better access — they can park out front next to the entrance — which is easier for those who use wheelchairs, canes or walkers, she said.

Martin says Mahaska Hearing Aid Center offers everything related to hearing such as hearing aids, batteries, amplified telephones and assistive listening devices.

The center has many brands of hearing aids in stock and can do custom hearing aid fittings.

"We work with the Telecommunications Access Iowa program that helps people get listening devices," Martin said.

Martin also said she works with the Farm Bureau and its Clear Value Hearing Healthcare Benefits Plan, a discount plan for Farm Bureau members.

Besides new products, Mahaska Hearing Aid Center can do hearing aid cleaning, repairs, fitting of new hearing aids and hearing tests.

"I can do a lot of repairs locally," Martin said.

Martin is active in many professional organizations. She is a member of the Professional Hearing Healthcare Providers, secretary of the Iowa Hearing

Association, a member of the International Hearing Society since 1994 and is board certified with the National Board of the National Hearing Instrument Sciences.

The Mahaska Hearing Aid Center's business hours are 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Saturday, after-hours and home visits can be made by appointment. The center can be reached at 673-5643 or (800) 571-5643. The Mahaska Hearing Aid Center is getting a Web site set up at www.mahaskahearing.com.

Martin lives in Oskaloosa and is available if customers call her at home. She said she will travel out of town to make house calls on customers in New Sharon or Knoxville. In the future, Martin plans to open a satellite office.

Shankster Masonry is in its 30th year of business serving the Osky area

Shankster Masonry, located at 2542 Bill Bone Drive, is owned and managed by Dennis Shankster. It is a masonry contracting company with a line of work involving new work as well as the repair and restoration of masonry products. Features include block walls, brick and stone veneers, masonry foundations, fire places, chimneys and linings, and brick and stone sidewalks and patios, and tuck-pointing.

As examples of repair and

restoration projects this past year, Shankster Masonry had the opportunity to work on a couple of the old buildings in Oskaloosa. The company tore out a portion of the front of the former Oriental Store building on High Avenue West and as a part of that project, cleaned and relaid brick that had been saved from the demolition to help bring back the building's original appearance. Shankster also tuck pointed existing masonry on the front of the former Mattingly Music Building on

the south side of the square.

Shankster is looking forward to the upcoming year with a positive outlook and will continue to operate with the belief that every customer is important no matter what size of job or what type of job that customer has. He would like to thank the many customers he has done business with over the past 30 years.

Shankster is a member of the Oskaloosa Chamber of Commerce and may be reached by phone or fax at (641) 673-5056.

Total Choice Shipping offers a wide array of services

OSKALOOSA — There's no mistaking that Total Choice Shipping in Oskaloosa is a shipping store. From boxes, to shipping tubes, to packing materials, they cover all the bases when it comes to customers' shipping needs.

But, customers are also greeted by the inviting aroma of coffee and the sight of cookies and chocolate treats, as well as greeting cards from Leanin' Tree, Blue Mountain and Northern Exposure.

So, while Total Choice Shipping can meet just about any need when it comes to shipping, it's also a friendly, inviting place to shop.

Owners Mike and Melanie Leaverton, who came to the area from Colorado, were used to places where they could one-stop-shop their shipping, something Oskaloosa didn't have.

Seeing an opportunity,

the Leavertons bought the rights to the Total Choice Shipping name and soon opened for business.

Since then, they've expanded their business capabilities to try and meet the needs of the widest range of customers they can.

For instance, Total Choice Shipping offers wide-format copying and laminating capabilities.

The copying machine will handle documents up to 36 inches wide, including most full-size blue prints and the laminating machine can laminate documents up to 27 inches wide.

They also offer wedding invitations, custom greeting cards, money orders, a fax service, postage stamps, and much more.

Customers with large items to ship can select from a variety of freight services.

"What I do is request quotes from five different

companies and then present that to the customer and they can choose how much they want to pay and how long they want it to take to get there," said Melanie.

Total Choice can even crate large items, if needed.

Customers who work during the day will be happy to know that even if they arrive at the store with a package, large or small, at 5:30 p.m., Total Choice Shipping can send off the package to arrive at its destination the next morning.

Total Choice also rents mailboxes, which are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

These services and many more are available at Total Choice Shipping, located at 1412 A Ave. W., from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., with extended hours during holidays.

For any questions, call (641) 673-MAIL(6245).

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