

Carr Hardware recognized for focus on community
— page 2



- ◆ OP-ED: EMBRACE OPPORTUNITY ARISING FROM MUSEUM CONTROVERSY 8
- ◆ AD INDUSTRY VETERAN CHANGES GEARS WITH PHANTOM CONCEPT..... 12
- ◆ WORKOUTS OF ALL SORTS OFFERED AT TWO NEW FITNESS STUDIOS..... 16-17
- ◆ FIRM DOES CUSTOM FABRICATION WORK FROM ASHLEY FALLS BASE 22



New director in place at Downtown Pittsfield Inc.
— page 4

BERKSHIRE TRADE & COMMERCE *monthly*

Vol. 21 No. 10

“The Business Journal For Berkshire County”

FEBRUARY 2018

ILLUMINATING IDEA

Project sheds new light on downtown visual enhancement

BY JOHN TOWNES

A project that debuted during the darkest day of the year last December aims to brighten up downtown Pittsfield with colorful high-tech lighting displays.

Berkshire Lightscares, a committee exploring lighting applications for downtown, launched a demonstration on the night of the

“Dynamic lighting downtown can lead to more excitement and energy.”

winter solstice on Dec. 21.

The display features a series of colored lights trained on the facade of 100 North St., a prominent office building on the corner of

North and Fenn streets. The display cycles through six color themes, changing at 20-second intervals.

The lights accent the columns and other architectural details of the ornate classical Greek-style building, which was constructed in 1908 as the home of the former First Agricultural Bank.

The goal of Berkshire Lightscares is to encourage permanent lighting displays on buildings and selected public spaces downtown, and possibly in other sections of the city.

“We’re hopeful this lighting demonstration will lead to Berkshire Lightscares and area stakeholders working together to find the funds needed to sequence a series of lightscares initially downtown and then throughout Pittsfield,” said Elie Hammerling, who founded the project.

The demonstration at 100 North St. (which is owned by CT Management) is slated to continue for an open-ended period.

continued on page 9



On each night since the winter solstice, the facade of the building at 100 North St. in downtown Pittsfield has been bathed in colorful changing lights positioned to highlight its architectural features. The high-tech lighting display is part of a demonstration project by Berkshire Lightscares, which hopes to encourage permanent lighting displays at other downtown buildings and public spaces. (Photo by Cody Johnson)

St. Mary’s to get new lease on life as ‘Morningstar’

Latest project by firm specializing in restoration of historic buildings

BY JOHN TOWNES

After being threatened with demolition to make way for a Dunkin’ Donuts store, the campus of the former St. Mary the Morningstar Catholic Church on Tyler Street in Pittsfield is now slated to be preserved and converted into market-rate rental housing.

In a joint press conference on Dec. 20, the City of Pittsfield and CT Management Group LLC announced the acquisition by CT Management of the 2.6-acre property and five structures on it from the Diocese of Springfield for \$500,000.

CT Management plans to convert the vacant structures – which include the former church, a parish house, a convent and a school – into a complex of 29 rental units, spread among the buildings. The basic layout and parking will be retained and landscaped to visually tie together the property.

The plan has been met with a mixture of relief and enthusiasm in the community.

“I am absolutely thrilled to know that one of our city’s most cherished and beautiful landmarks will have a new lease on life through its conversion to market-rate housing,” said Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer, in making the announcement.

However, the purchase of the St. Mary’s property is only the first step. The project, to be known as Morningstar, still faces financial and physical challenges because of its size and the extensive work that needs to be done on the buildings.

MassDevelopment, the state’s quasi-public development agency, provided financing

continued on page 18

Canine appreciation at heart of entrepreneur’s latest venture

‘Museum of Dog’ taking shape at downtown North Adams site

BY JOHN TOWNES

After a brief visit to North Adams last year, David York decided to buy a home, invest in other local real estate, and begin planning an unusual venture in the city – the Museum of Dog, a site devoted to all things canine.

While the speed with which he made that decision may seem surprising, it fits York’s pattern of specific decisions that grow into significant ventures.

York has had several successful careers over his lifetime, including developing popular fashion brands for Macy’s in the 1980s, establishing a chain of apple dumpling cafes, and launching a dog boarding business that grew to eight sites. He is also a real estate investor.

York said that he has been fortunate to be in the right place at the right time in his diverse careers. “It’s not like I planned anything out,” he said. “Everything I’ve done has just

continued on page 14



In the coming months, David York will be converting a North Adams commercial building into a canine-themed cultural attraction known as the Museum of Dog.

GOOD ideas

Berkshire Lightscapes continued from page 1

Lighting manufacturer Philips Color Kinetics has loaned equipment for the demonstration to Berkshire Lightscapes for a period of up to six months. The display may remain at 100 North St., or move to different sites if other property owners are interested in trying it out.

Hammerling, a retired administrator and consultant who lives in a downtown Pittsfield apartment, said he was inspired to launch the project while on a vacation in Arizona.

"I saw a lighting display at a botanical garden," he said. "I was very impressed, and thought it might be something we could do in Pittsfield. Dynamic lighting downtown can lead to more excitement and energy. Streets that are brightly lit are more inviting. It can also contribute to public safety downtown."

After his trip, Hammerling discussed the idea with others in the city, which led to the formation of Berkshire Lightscapes (www.berkshirelightscapes.com). It is under the fiscal management of the Downtown Pittsfield Cultural Association (DPCA), a 501c3 nonprofit organization whose mission includes promoting community enhancement programs in downtown Pittsfield.

In addition to Hammerling, committee members include Laurie Mick of the city's Community Development Department; Regina Burgio, a principle in RB Design Co.; Tim Burke of Milltown Capital; Peter Lafayette, a former president of Downtown Pittsfield Inc.; Eric Hill, an actor and director with Berkshire Theatre Group; and Steve Oakes, owner of Crawford Square and other commercial properties in the city.

Greylock Federal Credit Union contributed \$5,000 to fund initial consultations by the Lighting Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). Students and staff from the center studied and analyzed buildings and other sites to develop technical recommendations.

Multi-year project

Hammerling said Berkshire Lightscapes is expected to be a multi-year project. A primary goal is to encourage the owners of downtown buildings to install similar lighting systems, to create a permanent series of displays in the city center.

In addition, the committee is working to install lighting in several public spaces, in-



The high-tech equipment allows lighting to be programmed for specific patterns and colors, which can also be coordinated with lighting displays at other downtown buildings and locations. (Photo by Cody Johnson)

cluding Park Square, Dunham Mall and the adjacent City Hall, among others.

"Lighting would bring new life to spaces like Park Square, and brighten up the entrance to downtown," said Hammerling. "Also, having brighter lighting at City Hall and Dunham Mall could also make that area a site for outdoor evening entertainment and community gatherings, such as performances and school events."

Hammerling emphasized that the project is not being funded by the city. Instead, downtown property owners would purchase lighting systems for their buildings.

"Several of them are very interested in this," he said. "In addition to its overall effect for the city, it's an investment that can enhance the appearance of their buildings."

Lighting in public spaces would be funded by a combination of grants and contributions from the community.

Organizers have applied to MassDevelopment, a state economic development program, for a matching \$50,000 grant for lighting of public areas. If they receive that, they will conduct a fund-raising campaign for the match. If not, they will seek other sources.

Hammerling noted that Philips Color Kinetics has been willing to loan the lighting equipment as a pilot project.

"They recognized the level of interest here, and they see Pittsfield as an opportunity to demonstrate what can be done with their systems," he said.

The technical aspects of the demonstration are being handled by Pete Yetman, owner of Performance ECM, an electrical contractor based in the town of Peru. He is working in collaboration with the Boston office of Philips.

Affordable systems

The system, which is referred to as kinetic or intelligent lighting, was developed in the 1990s. It has been used to create lighting displays on the Empire State Building and other buildings, as well as parks, bridges and other public spaces.

"Until very recently, this technology was expensive and was used primarily in large cities," said Yetman. "Now, newer systems have been developed that are practical for use in smaller cities."

Yetman explained that the lights are energy-saving LEDs that emit variations of the three basic colors. "If you look at them directly they look like rainbows," he said. "But when they are projected, they create specific combinations that look like a single color."

They are in housings that can be programmed to create different color combinations and different timings. They are run by software, and a series of individual lights can be coordinated with each other.

"Each light is basically a miniature computer, and they can create an endless variety of themes," said Yetman.

Yetman installed the lights, and works with

guidance of technical representatives from Philips. They collaborate to create themes, with input from Berkshire Lightscapes.

He said many factors go into creating the basic setups and displays. He noted that it involves a combination of the familiar techniques he uses to install other types of lighting, and specific requirements of kinetic lighting.

"You place them to accent the architectural features of the specific building, and figure out the best angles and the effects of shadows," he said. "There are also practical considerations. You can't place them where they will impose on pedestrians."

The programming is a matter of experimenting with themes to determine what colors and combinations will highlight the building in the most interesting and attractive ways.

In terms of downtown Pittsfield, Yetman said there is great potential, especially if enough buildings decide to install lighting displays. "Ideally, all of the individual displays downtown could eventually be linked to a common Internet address, and be coordinated to create overall effects or light shows, such as seasonal and holiday themes," he said.

From a business standpoint, Yetman said that his training in kinetic lighting is expected to create a new market for his company in Pittsfield and other locations. "It adds a new capability for lighting," he said. ♦

Looking for a new financial advisor? Let's talk.

Bob Chapman, AAMS®
Financial Advisor



511 East St
Pittsfield, MA 01201
413-499-3025
www.edwardjones.com

Edward Jones®
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Member SIPC

Find your inner saver

INTRODUCING

ROUND UP CHECKING

Greylock takes your financial wellness seriously with our new Round Up Checking. Every time you use your debit card to make a purchase, we will Round Up the transaction to the nearest dollar and that rounded up amount goes right into your savings account.

Plus, each month Greylock will bump up your rounded up amount by 3%.

Let your money Nama-stay with you!



Greylock
Federal
Credit Union

Member Owned • Value Driven®

www.Greylock.org

Federally Insured by NCUA

We will round up your Greylock Visa® debit card purchases to the nearest dollar and transfer the difference from your checking account to your Greylock savings account. Only valid for accounts with e-statements. If rounding up would put your checking account in arrears, the round up will not occur. We may cancel or modify the Round Up Checking Account and any associated features at any time without prior notice. Round Up Checking is for personal banking accounts only.