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## Economic development intern selected to support business retention

Friday, August 28, 2009

ROCHESTER — Distinctive Forest Creations owners Mike and Michele Deegan moved their quality unfinished furniture business to North Main Street in April 2008 to take advantage of the sense of community and belonging that they and the Rochester Main Street Program were fostering.

The downturn in the economy has impacted businesses of all sizes and affected a wide variety of industries.

Mike says "Not only do we focus on what we can do to bring customers into our business, we work together with Rochester Main Street to help with downtown improvements and programs that will enhance that sense of community downtown that you just don't get in a big box store environment."

Some small independent businesses may be struggling with how to adapt their businesses to changes in the economy and finding resources to help them. The Rochester Economic Development Office is expanding and updating their resource guides and plans.

"We plan to work with individual independent business owners on developing action plans," said Karen Pollard, Rochester's Economic Development Manager. "The goal is also to identify opportunities for us to bring in training and other assistance as part of this business retention initiative. We want our businesses to have the skills to survive and thrive in a changing environment."

Partnerships with Rochester Main Street, the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, the SBA and Small Business Development Center and many other resource agencies are an important part of the retention effort.

Pollard announced, "We've selected Nancy K. Johnson as the economic development intern to implement this project. Her professional experience in the public sector as well as at the Lakes Region Planning Commission will help our office achieve our goals and complete this project as soon as possible."

The position involves meeting with business owners one-on-one and coordinating efforts by assistance or information that the business may need. Pollard noted that the city continues to focus on retention and keeping the business base strong and diversified.

The Rochester Economic Development Department website, [www.ThinkRochester.biz](http://www.ThinkRochester.biz), has an Entrepreneurial Center that will host expanded resource information as it develops. The Department may also be contacted through the site or

at 335-7522.

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