

The View from Main Street

I want to tell you about one of our hidden treasures in Ashland. This week, I had the pleasure to visit Larson-Juhl, one of our international businesses located on Sum Road in Ashland. I, along with City Administrator Mary Garness and AADC Director Dale Kupczyk, got acquainted with Paul Timmons, the new plant manager, who graciously provided a tour demonstrating how their products are made locally.

Larson-Juhl, a Berkshire Hathaway Company (owned by Warren Buffett), designs, manufactures and distributes fine custom frames of enduring style and superior craftsmanship. Larson-Juhl has a history of making custom frames for over 100 years and has grown to 21 facilities across North America and locations in 15 countries around the world. Their designers and manufacturing teams work hand-in-hand to create enduring frame designs in all of the popular home furnishing styles, so that custom framing customers can help clients preserve their treasures and add beauty to their homes. Larson-Juhl's Ashland facility specializes in crafting American-made frames of the highest quality using American hardwoods. The team takes great pride in their state-of-the-art facility, and the consistency of craftsmanship and quality make the Ashland facility the premier factory for made in America custom frames. The company, which currently employs 65 people, recently began to diversify by introducing a line of high quality wood window blinds.

Mr. Timmons also shared Larson-Juhl's Mission, i.e.: Preserve Treasures; Share Beauty; and Inspire Creativity. I was very impressed by the Larson-Juhl Values: Customer always comes first, Fair and honest in all dealings, Respect for the individual, Excellence in products and service, Rewards tie to performance, and Leadership by example.

Larson-Juhl also strives to preserve the environment. The company is proud to have partnered with American Forests to establish the Larson-Juhl Global ReLeaf Forest Foundation, which assists with forest restoration and establishment around the world. Since 1992, the Larson-Juhl Global ReLeaf Forest Foundation has planted over 400,000 trees worldwide. The company employs lean manufacturing principles in their system and it was evident on our tour that this means a plant that is well organized, clean and bright, with minimal waste. One of the things discussed is the company's need for future employees who are well trained and suited to handle



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the demands of 21st century manufacturing jobs, especially in the years ahead as so many baby boomers retire. This means individuals with mechanical and critical thinking skills will be in demand in the coming decade. We

belatedly welcome Paul and his wife, Mary, who moved to the area from Massachusetts, to Ashland. For more information about Larson-Juhl, go to the company website at: www.LarsonJuhl.com or contact Paul Timmons to arrange a plant tour.

I want to thank everyone in the city who is doing a good job of mowing their grass on a regular basis. I have been asked by Public Works Dept. to provide a gentle reminder, now that it is mowing season, to be mindful of the importance of not putting or allowing cut grass into the street. What happens is that all the grass eventually washes into the storm sewer and is carried to the lake, where it decays and creates problems for the water in the Bay. Chequamegon Bay is the source of the water supply for the city of Ashland. This is one small way that you can help make a difference in protecting this precious resource.

Speaking of water, the new Maslowki Beach artesian well is still anticipated to be completed this summer. Testing of the water at the new well has determined that the water there is free from bacteria and nitrates. We are continuing to work with the DNR. Due to the heavy rains this month, progress on the Sixth Street reconstruction project is a few weeks behind schedule but work began again in earnest this week and workers are expected to catch up in the next week or so if the fine weather continues to hold. Work on the Seventh Avenue East project is actually ahead of schedule and is expected to be completed by the end of July.

A big 'thank you' to the Ashland Rotary Club for volunteering time to paint the bathroom building at Maslowki Beach this week. You folks rock! Kudos as well to the Lions Club for their volunteer hours constructing the new pavilion at the Ellis Park on Stuntz Avenue East. We love our volunteers! It helps make our city vibrant when we all pitch in.

Enjoy this precious summer season. It doesn't get much better than this.

Mayor Deb Lewis