

Printing company 'recycles' DPW garage

Southbridge building bought from town

By Sandy Meindersma
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE — The new owners of the town's former public works garage know a thing or two about recycling, but usually on a much smaller scale.

Expert Laser Services recently bought the former garage at 62 Pleasant St., and is converting it into usable space for manufacturing, sales and customer service operations.

The company, which provides printing services to companies and recycles laser printer cartridges, purchased the building for \$130,000. The renovation project is expected to cost more than twice the purchase price.

Company President Mike Carpentier calls the renovation project "our grandest recycling effort ever," and joked that it is a candidate for the television show "Extreme Makeover."

Prior to purchasing the property, the company ordered an environmental analysis of the building to verify it would be a safe place to work.

"It took a lot of time, but everything came back clean," said Bob Chernisky Sr., the company's marketing manager.

"There are no brownfields, no hazards."

The renovation plans include converting the building's interior — a large open garage space — into manufacturing and office space.

"The heating and cooling systems need to be upgraded, and we will be using the space in a much more efficient way than we currently do," Mr. Chernisky said.

The building's exterior is also being completely changed, with the existing large overhead door to be replaced by glass entry doors; windows will be installed to provide natural lighting as well.

"And that means the loading dock will be in the back," Mr. Chernisky said. "There will be an overhang to protect our technicians from the weather, and enough space for all of the vans to load up at the same time."

Bob Chernisky Jr., a marketing associate for Expert Laser, said the company considered adding solar panels and geothermal heat, but the cost was too high.

Company representatives and town officials said the purchase of the former DPW garage is a win-win for all parties involved.

Expert Laser purchased the property for significantly less than the assessed value of more than \$300,000. The town was able to add to its coffers, both from the sale of the property and because the property is now subject to real estate taxes, and

will generate a continual revenue stream.



Mike Carpentier, president of Expert Laser Services, is shown at the former Southbridge public works garage on Pleasant Street, which the company recently purchased.

T&G STAFF/CHRISTINE PETERSON

Prior to the sale, the property had been vacant since 2009, when the DPW moved into its new facility on Guelphwood Road.

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Town Manager Christopher Clark said there had been other bidders for the building, which was sold on Oct. 11.

Prior to the sale, the property had been vacant since 2009, when the DPW moved into its new facility on Guelphwood Road.

Expert Laser Services, which has been in business for 23 years, is an employee-owned business that has 20 employees at its current location at 1 North St. in Southbridge and another 10 at a facility in Ridgeland, S.C.

Mr. Chernisky Sr. said the company has been growing steadily, and that additions to the staff are expected.

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