

ENTREPRENEURS



Jonathan D. Woods/The Gazette

Donna Reynolds searches for a set of sheets on sale at Kohl's on Tuesday for a client in Coraville. Reynolds' service business does just about any errands or tasks clients ask her to do.

Up and running

Marion woman takes on clients' to-do lists

By Cindy Hadish
The Gazette

MARION — Donna Reynolds doesn't wish she could be in two places at once, but she knows many people who do.

The 43-year-old Marion woman's impressive time management skills and high energy level are a perfect fit for her home-based business that is nearing its anniversary.

Home Run Errands began in February as a service for busy couples or the elderly who need shopping done or dry cleaning picked up, house sitting for vacationers and many other options.

The idea came from a need Reynolds observed among the elderly people she visited.

When taking commu-

nion to homebound church members, one woman commented that her smoke detector had been beeping for a week. Others needed light bulbs changed or just companionship.

"It started with that," Reynolds said.

She took out a loan and printed brochures that provide a rate scale from \$5 for a quick errand — under 10 minutes — to \$375 for 20 hours.

Her brochures and a slogan on her car, a boxy white Scion, tout the message: "We will do just about anything as long as it's legal and ethical."

Some would-be clients don't heed the message.

Reynolds laughed as she described a call from one man who wanted a companion. Reynolds said she plays cards and visits the elderly as part of her services, but the man wanted something more.

"I told him, 'I don't think

Contact

Home Run Errands can be reached at: (319) 377-0975 (office) or (319) 202-4020 (cell phone).

you want me,'" she said, joking that her "errands" listing is next to "escorts" in the phone book.

Teenagers who see the phone number on her car have also called, asking if she'll deliver alcohol for parties. Some have called at 2 a.m., requesting beer.

"I don't do that," Reynolds said, adding she turns down jobs that seem suspicious.

The majority of her clients are working couples who don't seem to have enough time to get everything done, and small businesses that need deliveries, but can't spare an employee to leave the work site.

"She's great with our customers," said Amy Housel-

og, manager of Via Panera Catering, an arm of Panera Bread. Reynolds has delivered food for the northeast Cedar Rapids caterer since August.

A somewhat disheartening sign of the times has also been a boon for business. People who formerly relied on neighbors for house sitting aren't as trusting, Reynolds noted.

One couple found that a neighbor had been going through their mail while they were away, she said.

Reynolds also works part-time as a food broker, placing new items in stores, but still has time to do her own and others' errands.

"It's so effortless for me," she said, adding that only on her busiest days has she contemplated hiring her own employees. "I'd like a whole fleet of Scions running around."

■ Contact the writer: (319) 398-8428 or cindy.hadish@gazettecommunications.com

BRIEFLY

WALL STREET

Stocks finish day lower on Intel earnings report

Wall Street staggered through another volatile session Wednesday, closing mostly lower after a 300-point Dow Jones report showed weak economic growth at the end of 2007 and after Intel Corp.'s disappointing profit report.

Stocks gave up a pickup early in the day in minutes of trading, confounding the expectations of a rebound. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 100.58 points, or 0.32 percent, to 31,846.58.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 7.36, or 0.66 percent, to 1,475.38, and the leading composite index finished down 21.46, or 0.96 percent, at 2,364.58.

AIR TRAVEL

C.R. airport posts record year for passenger use

More passengers used the Eastern Iowa Airport in 2007, logging 1 million travelers for the fourth time in the airport's history.

Last year, 1,010,000 passengers used the regional airport, up 2.6 percent from the previous record, set in 2004 when 1,002,000 passengers arrived or departed.

Major air carriers have been reflecting capacity due to sharply higher fuel costs. While the Eastern Iowa Airport is expected to see some schedule changes, Airport Director Dan Moon says there have been no indications of any permanent change.

EARNINGS

Wells Fargo profit slides to lowest level in 6 years

Wells Fargo & Co. ended 2007 with its lowest quarterly profit in six years, dropping down by the Seattle-based volume and mortgage originators that are toughing tight credit of the housing industry.

The San Francisco-based company said Wednesday that it earned \$1.36 billion, or 41 cents per share, during the final three months of the year. That was 10 percent below last quarter's \$1.5 billion, or 46 cents per share, at the same time in 2006.

Wells Fargo's revenue growth in the fourth quarter was more impressive, rising 2 percent to \$20.21 billion from \$19.41 billion in 2007.

BUSINESS

Home builders' outlook remains near record low

A reading of U.S. home builders' sentiment remained near a record low in January, as gloom engulfed the housing industry.

The National Association of Home Builders said Wednesday its housing sentiment index, which gauges builders' perceptions of conditions, interest rates, power and expectations for home sales over the next six months, came in at 19 in January — the second-lowest point on record.

The group also projected December's reading downward for one point to 18, the lowest point since the index began in 1995.

Cost of gas

Table with 3 columns: Item, Regular, Unleaded. Rows include Gasoline, Diesel, and other fuel types.

MONEY

Market indicators: DOW 12,846.58, NASDAQ 2,364.58, GOLD 996.70, SILVER 457.95

Not ready to fly Boeing delays maiden flight of 787 airliner to 2009, TB

Farmer deaths expected to draw attention to safety

By Gaby Malin The Seattle Times. A report showing that farmers accounted for nearly one-third of Iowa worker deaths last year should draw more attention to prevention and safety, said an official who released the data.

More information The Iowa Public Assessment and Control Division program is conducted by the U.S. Injury Prevention Research Center at the University of Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health at the UI Health Science Center.

Blending equipment while it's being maintained, he said. The most common cause of farmworker fatalities — use of three deaths — was the overturn of older tractors not equipped with a rollover protective structure.



Doreen Reynolds searched for a set of shoes on sale at Kohl's on Tuesday for a client in Corvallis. Reynolds' service business does just about any errands or tasks clients ask her to do.

Up and running

Marion woman takes on clients' todo lists

By Gaby Malin The Seattle Times. A 43-year-old Marion woman's impressive time management skills and high energy level are a perfect fit for her business-based business that is meeting its own needs.

Contact

More than 600 calls can be made at (253) 273-0375 or (253) 270-4020 (cell phone).

Food, fuel costs push inflation to 17-year high

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumer prices rose in 2007 at the fastest pace in 17 years as motorists paid a lot more for gasoline and grocery shops paid higher food bills.

Price indexes, which include both energy and food, rose 2.4 percent last year, slightly lower than the 2.6 percent increase of 2006. It is the performance of core inflation that the Fed closely monitors.

Getting a credit card of her own

Erica Maibach is not your average college student. The 23-year-old graduate student at the University of Minnesota has a credit card. On a weekend from her first job, she was able to get a job at a school restaurant where she graduates next year.

Three she hopes to become the proud owner of a new car and a house.

It's time to get credit. But Erica Maibach says her "fairly clean" credit history will make it difficult to qualify for a card, especially one with cash rewards. Erica Maibach's credit history is not perfect.

So she looked online in search for the right card. "It's difficult to be overwhelmed," says Maibach of her quest. She wants a card that's accepted at stores where she has an idea and offers online bill pay.

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