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AUTHENTIC WOMAN PROFILE: PAM MORSE, BUSINESS WOMAN AND VILLAGE OF FAIRPORT HARBOR COUNCILWOMAN

CINDY CRAWFORD MAY 20 2013 0



"Be true to your beliefs. Follow what you were raised with as a young person." Business woman and Village of Fairport Harbor Councilwoman Pam Morse leads by example.

As a young person, Pam worked with her father in his moving company and auction house, a business he started more than 50 years ago. She joined her father in his venture 20 years after college and living abroad. Later, the company's offerings expanded into 48 states, including international shipments.

The first 8 to 10 years of working in the family business were filled with lots of learning. "Anytime you work with a family member, you have to learn to differentiate family stuff and business stuff. It was a very, very tough experience in the beginning. We have a lot of businesses and we are constantly growing and expanding, so to encompass all of that knowledge, it did take a good 8 to 10 years."



Acquiring years of business knowledge and experience led Pam to owning and operating her own businesses: Morse Van Lines, a local, long distance and international moving company; and Auction Alley, an auction liquidation of real estate, household, and commercial goods based in Painesville, Ohio, 28 miles east of Cleveland in Lake County.

In the near future, Pam aspires to expand her moving company's concierge service for seniors. "The challenge is trying to get the information out to the senior market; baby

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boomers and retirees. Many seniors lack sufficient technical knowledge and need our services, but don't know how to reach us other than a phone book. We want to reach that demographic in a non-technical, cost-effective way." Reaching people comes naturally for Pam.



Recently, she was presented with an offer she hadn't considered before. About two years ago, the Mayor of Fairport Harbor prepared to assume the position of mayor. The Council approached Pam and asked if she would be interested in holding the seat the remaining term. "I submitted an application and interviewed with the remaining Council seat and Mayor and Village Administrator about three times. I was quite surprised. We were chosen Business of the Year in 2012, and at the 2012 Awards Banquet in front of about 300 to 400 people, they announced on stage that they decided to offer me the position seat on the Council. I was very surprised because there were some other folks who were candidates being interviewed. They swore me in that evening."

We had a lot of old school thoughts . . .

Since becoming councilwoman, Pam has major plans for continuous growth and development in the Village of Fairport Harbor. A progressive thinker who welcomes new opportunities, Pam has her hands full when it comes to easing anxieties some residents have about inviting change to the 200-year-old village. "They were celebrating their bicentennial last year. We had a lot of old school thoughts . . . we are trying to get the village residents who are generational residents. For example, my great grandparents resided there back in the early 1900s. There are still a lot of those same thoughts of 'this is my great grandparents, my grandparents, my parents . . . I don't want to sell this property or I don't want to upgrade this property. I'm not going to welcome new folks into my village. So it's one of those bumper stickers that you see 'you've seen us now go home.' We have tried to get rid of that thought. We want to invite new people into the village. That is one of our biggest obstacles. It is slowly changing."

DID YOU KNOW?

Fairport Harbor, at the mouth of the Grand River, is the largest natural harbor in Lake County. The harbor maintains limited commercial traffic. Major products shipped through the port are sand and limestone. Rock salt is the major export.

The village is bordered on three sides by water; on the north by Lake Erie, and on the west and south by the Grand River.

Changes are coming to the Village

Village officials actively seek outside funding to improve the community. The Lake-Geauga Fund from the Cleveland Foundation and the Painesville Community Improvement Corporation are just a couple of organizations they work with.

Last year they had 12 different bicentennial events for the Tourism Committee: Masquerade Magic, a kickoff to Lent; Fairport Heritage Foundation's Heritage Motorcycle Run, in its second year; Radio Disney Crew's *The Next Best Thing*, a format similar to American Idol, where winners will perform in June; and an Achieve Wellness Community, the first of its kind in Lake County. They are also making a walking path around the village, which is a perfect 5K run. It will have two paths, a red one and a blue one. The red path is a more heart conscious path offering a steeper climb to get the heart pumping. The blue path is an easier, level path. "Over the next five years we are going to continue to be an Achieve Wellness Community. We are hoping to have a wellness event in the village every month. It could be a Kids' Day, a Dance Challenge or a 5K Run, or a First 5K Run. That's what we have to do in the next five years – continue to improve that Achieve Wellness. We are also hoping to make our business and commercial bases stronger and more attractive to incoming new businesses. It's a Mom and Pop community, and it's the Mom and Pop businesses that will continue to make our nation strong and grow."

Pam is driven to continuously encourage villagers to be open to new modern-day opportunities and experiences that have helped the business community in general. To date, she has raised more than \$500,000 for non-profits in the community doing benefit auctions and volunteering her time. And she loves doing it. "We all need to support small business and be ambassadors to the community and to the outside communities so people will want to come in and participate in the events and go to the small businesses."

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Social media plays a key role in growth opportunities for the village as well. A partnership with Radio Disney Crew proved fruitful at last year's Holiday Harbor December event, 'Get Grinch'd', where the Grinch comes to the village and reads a story from the top of a lighthouse the first Saturday in December. As a result, attendance increased from 150 to 600 attendees; quadruple the amount in the year prior. This was "a big first step to a committed partnership using social media and modern technology to reach people," says Pam.

"Give back to the community in which you live. The benefit is business comes back to you ten-fold. People see that you are out there; you're giving; you're part of your community and you want your community to be better for not only your family and your employees, but for everyone. Whether you are a new person moving in, a new mom, a new set of young parents, a senior . . . help the people locally in your community."

For more information about Morse Van Lines visit www.morsevanlines.com or call 800-533-1636.

To reach Pam Morse at the Village of Fairport Harbor, send an email to: pmorse@fairportharbor.org.

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About the author: **Cindy Crawford**

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Cindy is a writer and an advocate of personal growth and development who delights in self-discovery and helping others realize their personal power. She is a member of Homewood Writers Group and Toastmasters International! Cindy resides in Chicago

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