

### And So It Grows.....

The efforts of a specific local developer is paying off in the present and will benefit Decatur even more so in the near future. Developer, John Cardwell believes that the nucleus of our city is our downtown area, and that it is centrally located for all. He supports the growing national trend of resurrecting the "community neighborhood" concept, and is personally and professionally giving his best effort to make those ideas become a reality in downtown Decatur.

In the past two years, Cardwell has purchased some critical downtown buildings and used his vision to create some highly beneficial solutions to some problem locations. Since his success with the renovation of the Professional Building, he has moved on to buy Jimmy Ryan's Restaurant as well as the building and turned it into a tenant filled enterprise renamed One Main Place. Expect to see the Wild Daisy Gift Shop (owned by Joyce Rhodes) to open in the lower level of One Main Place by mid-September, where basic convenience store items along with a news stand and Decatur souvenirs will be for sale.

Cardwell also purchased the former El Dora building which now houses The Grand Design, along with a rented one-bedroom apartment upstairs. His most recent acquisition has been the Flora Gema building. Not to worry, though, Flora Gema is staying with a long-term lease agreement. Cardwell plans to invest \$200,000 or more for improvements to the building to attract upscale professionals to locate there. Currently there is 6,000 square feet available for use.

His belief is that downtown is still in need of more diversity in order to fully achieve the community neighborhood concept of years ago. The need for a full service pharmacy along with more retail



John Cardwell

shops, nighttime entertainment and more restaurant choices is tantalizing more and more developers to reevaluate the value of downtown investment. The cost factor of \$8 to \$10 per square foot in a downtown location is an appealing factor versus the possible \$18 to \$20 per square foot cost in a mall location. Laura Guy, Executive Vice President of the Downtown Decatur Council says, "I've received more calls from downtown building owners searching for new tenants during the last two months than I have had all year long." She further states that she feels this is highly indicative of the increasing demand for a downtown location.

Cardwell comments that city government overall is more supportive and proactive in the resurgence of downtown. His philosophy is similar to an old long-standing commercial tag line: "Try it - you'll like it!" He urges citizens to shop downtown, browse through the stores, eat at the restaurants and really find out just how much is happening in downtown Decatur.

### Entrepreneurial Spirit Lives On.

Webster's Dictionary defines an entrepreneur as one who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise. Or, in other words, a potential workaholic! Just ask one of the following business owners for their views on that particular word, and I'm sure they'll agree with the synonym of workaholic, but more likely will talk more about their love and satisfaction of their chosen field of business.

For instance, take the Victoriana Bed and Breakfast located at 640 W. Main. The spirited woman who conceived this business is Norma Hickensbottom, and she truly gives new meaning to the word determined. She has single-handedly restored the

entire house herself from top to bottom not long after her husband passed away. A self-taught person, she relies on books and relentless determination to teach herself what she needs to know about restoring a house. She has turned this building into a lovely, unique bed and breakfast that she primarily gears toward corporate executives who are in town for longer stays. And as her business continues to grow, she spends her spare time (nah!) being actively involved with the Decatur community, particularly NWRAPS, a group focused on the restoration of old buildings in our city. Give her a call at 428-0637 or stop by and appreciate her efforts.

### A Grand Thanks

Peggy Phipps

We wish to extend a very special "Thank you" to The Transfer Register for featuring us at "The Grand Design" in their July/August issue. It assisted us in announcing our move to downtown with grace and excitement. We are now back to our daily routine of servicing clients

and are anxious to meet new people as they stop in to see us and learn more about "who we are."

We are look forward to planning our Grand Opening early this fall. Our hours are Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and scheduled appointments on weekends.