

# More than 1,000 work in Community Trust Plaza

By JOHN CANNON  
The Independent

**E**ACH WEEKDAY hundreds of pedestrians walk by a building in the heart of downtown Ashland in which more than 1,000 people work. Yet many of the other workers in the city's central business district don't even realize so many people work high above them on the top 11 floors of the 14-story Community Trust Bank at the corner of Winchester Avenue and Judd Plaza. In fact, some think the upper floors of the city's tallest building are vacant — or nearly so.

That makes the Community Trust Plaza — the name given to the top 11 floors — one of the best kept secrets in downtown Ashland. But for those who work in the building and those who visit the many professional offices high above Winchester Avenue and Judd Plaza, the Community Trust Plaza is not a secret. Instead it is a good place in which to work and do business.

"We think this is a great place to do business," said Larry Royster, regional facilities manager of Community Trust Bank, who oversees the building. "We have 86,000 square feet of space, 11 public floors plus three restricted ones for a total of 14 floors."

"We have new elevators and fire alarms and a new sprinkler system," Royster continued. "We are completely climate controlled and have a new boiler system."

Despite being built long before handicapped accessibility was required, Royster said the building is in complete compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. While parking can be a problem in downtown Ashland, the bank's parking garage — located across Judd Plaza from the building — provides ample parking for the tenants, he said.

Among the buildings many tenants are more than 20 attorneys, with about a third of them being part of the law firm of VanAntwerp, Monge, Jones, Edwards & McCann, which occupies the fourth and fifth floors of the building. But among the other tenants are a professional geologist, an certified public accountant, a counseling service, a portrait studio and at last two nonprofit agencies.

It was not long ago that the building was completely full, Royster said, but the sagging economy has created a handful of vacancies. But as the economy continues to improve, he is convinced the building soon will again have no vacancies.

"We offer excellent facilities in a central location in the tallest building in Ashland, and we keep our rent low enough to make this building one of the best bargains in Ashland," Royster said. "We don't think there is a better place in Ashland for your office."

## An accountant

Adrienne Auvil, a certified public accountant, thinks her office on



ABOVE: The view from Adrienne M. Auvil's CPA office in the Community Trust Building in downtown Ashland. BELOW: Auvil at work in her office. PHOTOS BY MARK MAYNARD / THE INDEPENDENT



the top floor of the building offers one of the most spectacular views in Ashland. Her office window overlooks Judd Plaza and is directly across from the historic First Presbyterian Church.

Auvil has been in the same location since 1990, when she ceased working for an accounting firm in Huntington and started her own business. About two-thirds of her business is preparing tax forms — all types, not just income taxes — for both business and individual clients, with the remainder of her

time spent keeping the books for small businesses and nonprofits.

Because of the location of her office, Auvil admits that she doesn't get much walk-in business. It is rare when someone wanders in wanting help in filling out their taxes, she said. "We're not visible enough to attract that kind of business."

Auvil admits that business was slow when she first launched her private practice, but because her mother was elderly and in failing health, Auvil said she needed to

work part-time so she could have the time to care for her mother.

"I'm sure we could get more business if we were located on the street, but this arrangement works well for me," Auvil said. "This is a good place in which to work and I have no intention of moving."

Auvil said the top floor of Community Trust Plaza is an extremely popular location that has no vacancies. "As long as the elevator works, it is a great place to be," she said. "And the bank has really made a lot of improvements on the elevators and in the rest of the building."

## Two lawyers

Attorney George Stavros has had his office on the ninth floor of Community Trust Plaza, since the 1980s although the bank has undergone several name changes since then.

"I like it here," Stavros said. "It is centrally located, and because this is the tallest building in Ashland, it is easy to find. I have a lot of out-of-town clients and when I tell them we are in the tallest building in town, they have no trouble finding us."

Stavros also says he sees a lot of advantages to have his office in the same building as so many other attorneys. "There is a lot of networking that goes on in this building. Sometimes the attorneys on

both sides of a lawsuit get together and work out a settlement without ever leaving this building."

Just across the hall from Stavros' office is the office of Elaine Holmes, and Holmes said she has benefited greatly from her neighbor.

"I can't say enough good things about George Stavros," Holmes said. "I have learned so much from him. He has been like a mentor to me and has always given me great advice. I am fortunate to have him just across the hall."

Stavros says Holmes is representative of one of the biggest changes he has seen during his half century of practicing law.

"When I started out there were not many women practicing law, and the few that we did have were not given much respect by the male lawyers," Stavros said. "They were called 'sweetheart' and 'honey' and asked to do menial jobs. They deserved better."

Now the number of female attorneys in Ashland may outnumber the male attorneys, Stavros said, and many of them are excellent lawyers with Holmes being one of the best.

Both Stavros and Holmes handle a lot of bankruptcies, and both said their primary goal is to find a way to keep their clients in business. For example, by filing Chapter 13 bankruptcies, she has been able to work out a way for many clients to keep their homes.

"That is always my goal," she said.

Holmes also handles everything from divorces to criminal cases "and everything in between."

"One thing about being in private practice on your own is you get experience with all areas of the law. That's what keeps it interesting," Holmes said.

## For Jamie's Sake

In 2004, Lea Ann Gollihue signed a lease for office space on the 8th floor of Community Trust Plaza for a non-profit agency that at the time did not really exist except in the mind of Gollihue.

Gollihue named the agency For Jamie's Sake after a child she met at a Christmas party for children in foster care. When asked what she wanted for Christmas, the girl, whose name was Jamie, said, "A family."

Since then Gollihue and a handful of dedicated volunteers have dedicated their lives to assisting children in foster care and helping families with adoptive services. Gollihue's goal is always to find a "forever family" for each child.

"There is not another agency like this one in the country," Gollihue said, although a second For Jamie's Sake has recently opened in northern Kentucky.

For Jamie's Sake now operates most of the eighth floor of Community Trust Plaza and had a clothing closet for children in foster care, a play area and a place where families with foster children can come for help or just to talk.

"We operate on a real shoestring budget," said Gollihue, who quite a full time job to launch the agency that still has no paid employees.

"We are a completely volunteer organization," Gollihue said. "We get a few donations, some support from churches and funds from the United Way. We never have a lot of money, but we always somehow get by."

While For Jamie's Sake would have much more visibility and probably get more generations if it were in a street level storefront, Gollihue said one advantage of its current location is that "if someone comes in here we know it was because they were referred to us. If they walk through our door, we know they need our help and we try our best to meet their needs."

"The bank has been great to us," Gollihue said. "We could not exist without them."

## Freeze

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Talk centers on politics and basketball, University of Kentucky basketball to be specific.

"The discussion can be heated at times," she said.

Posters and memorabilia of the UK team lines a wall and a television in the corner stays on, especially when there's a game to be watched.

Courtney Pennington said he believes a couple of sandwiches are at the top of the list of most popular dishes served.

"I've made a lot of cheeseburgers and Philly steak sandwiches," he said.

The two agree milkshakes are wildly popular, especially peanut butter flavored.

"I wish I had a dollar for every milkshake I've made here," he said.

Percy Pennington said you can get just about any sandwich you want and as for milkshakes, he rattled off the choices instantly, a list that includes the standard chocolate, strawberry and vanilla, but also includes the more exotic raspberry and hot fudge. He said the choices of ice cream during the winter months gets down to three,

but they made a point to offer a much wider variety as the weather warms up.

Although not a fast-food restaurant, Frosty Freeze has a drive-through window. Customers can call in their order and pick it up without leaving their cars.

"I've never seen a place like this anywhere and I've been all over," the younger Pennington said.

Besides locals, the place has attracted a number of celebrities, including music stars The Judds, the late Keith Whitley, Ralph Stanley, Melvin Goins, Ricky Skaggs and The Primitives. Actor David Keith was scouting information for a movie and visited, and Pat Ford

from ESPN and UK basketball player Jeff Shepherd have eaten there.

Son Cortney Seth Pennington, 29, who now works with his father, said Frosty Freeze is known beyond these parts, too.

"When we were on our honeymoon in Tampa, Fla., my wife went to a nail salon and when she told the girl we were from eastern Kentucky, she asked if we knew about Frosty Freeze," he said.

The Penningtons agree the crowds might not be as big as they were 30 years ago, but it's still a steady stream of customers all day, with a concentration at meal time that keeps the seven employ-

ees and owners hopping.

"It gets hectic at times," the younger Pennington said.

The fast-paced restaurant business hasn't gotten too fast for Percy Pennington, who said he has no plans to retire.

"I'll work as long as I'm able," he said. "Doing nothing, I don't believe I'd like that."

His son grinned and added, "I can't get him to leave."

Frosty Freeze is open daily from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. "We've cut back the hours a little," Percy Pennington said with a grin.

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