



City of Dreams...

A new business in Fayette takes you back in time to plan for the future

BY DANNY HARRISON

"If you were 85 year old, felt good, had healthy relationships and a solid financial position, how would you want to spend the rest of your life?"

Prime Financial Services, one of Fayette County's newest businesses, has created a "City of Dreams," which owner Alfred Dingler says is designed to motivate and inspire his clients to think of the possibilities.

To achieve this, Dingler, his wife Jolene and a whole cast of dreamers completely renovated an old daycare center and, using around 1,000 antiques and replicas, created a workspace that looks and feels like a turn-of-the-last-century, Southern town.

Established in 1985 as an independent, Clayton County based insurance agency, Prime Financial Services recently opened the doors to its new office at the corner of Hwy. 92 South and Antioch Road. The company now offers complete insurance and investment services, as well as estate planning and more.

Commuters and local residents have watched with interest as the former brightly-colored, flashy building evolved into something more architecturally conducive to surrounding area. What many may not know, however, is that what lies behind the gorgeous front door may be one of the most amazing and thoughtfully planned office interiors in the state. Every room and corridor has a theme and a name... yes, even the bathrooms.

Alfred's office is called 'Kauffman's Exchange,' and is decorated with Wall Street styled bulls and bears.

Jolene's office is 'Jolene's Collectibles,' which looks like a classic doll shop.

Outdoorsy folks will enjoy 'The Hunter's Den,' which serves as an office for Alfred's business partner Karl Thomason. The den features authentic wildlife mountings and a real zebra skin rug on the floor.

Prime Financial's conference room is not to be missed, with its 19th Century bagatelle table now used as a glass-topped conference table. And vying for the most impressive artifact is the reception area, which was fashioned by late 19th Century teller windows, wall panels and letter boxes from the Monticello Post Office.

So how in the world did the Dinglers acquire enough of the right kinds of antiques to decorate an entire office building in



this manner?

"We became very detailed e-Bay shoppers," says Jolene. She and Alfred also scoured the Lakewood Antiques Market and other such venues to get what they needed.

The renovation project began in October and was completed last month, but collecting the antiques took a good deal longer.

When the decision was made to relocate the business, the Dinglers called on remodeling expert and Tyrone resident Bob Godwin to help them turn their City of Dreams into reality.

Alfred says Bob was critical to the project's success. "We knew our vision was going to work," he said, "because Bob was going to make it happen."

"It was fun. It was a joint family effort," said Bob, who explained that his own daughter and the Dinglers' children came up with their own ideas for the project, too.

"I think we had our priorities straight," Alfred noted. "I don't think we put our kids on the back burner one time. And for them, this place is like a wonderland."

So, you may be wondering, 'What does an old-fashioned town have to do with financial planning?'

"It's about exploring more in life than just a paycheck," Alfred says, noting that attention was paid to the smallest details to ensure that clients were inspired to relax and dream of the possibilities. He said that, with clients, his financial advice sessions often start with discussions on personal relationships.

"If you can have happy, healthy relationships, that's



At top Alfred and Jolene Dingler greet clients in an area designed like a 1800s post office, complete with letter windows. At bottom, business partner Karl Thomason feels right at home in the "Hunter's Den." It's all a part of the turn of the century (19th century, this is) decor.

(STAFF PHOTO BY DANNY HARRISON)

what's most important," he says. "That's the starting point."

Also important is that clients seem to love the new environment. And Jolene, who took the lead in looking after the decorating details, says these last few days have been rewarding as folks from the community have dropped by for a visit.

"To me, that's the best part,"

Jolene says, "to watch people come through and to see the amazement."

Karl says he has also had his share of fun in giving clients tours of the new office.

"I tell them before they start, 'You're not going to see another building like this in Georgia,'" he said.

"When they finish, they concur."