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What's so great about the city?

Community Development Corporations

If you've read CSL's past E-Blasts, then you know that we have introduced a number of neighborhoods and the organizations, many of them Community Development Corporations, that work to improve them. CDCs, which began to flourish in the 1980s, are locally-controlled non-profit groups that are held accountable to local residents, and engage in a wide range of physical, economic, and human development activities in their neighborhood.

Greetings!

Welcome to the October 2005 edition of Cool Space Locator's E-Blast. This month we profile one of CSL's clients, feature the Hazelwood Neighborhood of Pittsburgh, and introduce you to one of the two newest faces in our office. Thanks for reading!

• **Client Profile: Testa Consulting**

Who
Testa Consulting

What
Testa is a technical consulting company that provides information technology staffing services; they are self-proclaimed "geek matchmakers". Their motto is "the right geek for the job", and they take pride in their ability to properly match skilled IT candidates (both temporary and full-time) with companies in the Pittsburgh region and beyond.

Where
1200 sf space on the 4th floor of the Crane Building, 40 24th Street in the Strip District

Why
Testa Consulting was a Cool Space Locator client back in 2002 when CEO Mike Testa realized it was time to move out of a suburban office park in Wilkins Township. Mike was looking for a new space with a good location, ample parking, and a unique character. He knew that his business was growing out of their existing space and he had started looking for space in June of 2002; he found his match in December and moved in at the end of February. The historic Crane Building in the Strip District was a perfect match for Testa Consulting because of the great character and design, exposed brick walls, technology infrastructure, parking, proximity to clients, and a central location so that Testa's employees, clients, and candidates can all easily get to the office.



CDCs reinforce and enhance community housing, commercial businesses, job development, and other activities, the social foundation of neighborhoods. A CDC's mission is normally about serving the local needs businesses and low- or moderate-income households.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) helps fund hundreds of CDCs across the country, with funds from foundations, corporations, and individuals.

In addition to financial resources, LISC also provides technical assistance to communities. Learn more about LISC at www.lisc.org. In addition, links for several Pittsburgh area CDCs are available on [CSL's website](#), under About CSL/Affiliate Links.

Nearing the end of his 3-year lease term, Mike Testa decided to check back in with Cool Space Locator. He felt that the 1200 sf space could hold his company for another two years or so before growing substantially, but wanted to see some other spaces that may be better suited for expansion in the future. After seeing a few spaces, Testa decided to renew his lease for another two years at the Crane Building.

What Else

Mike Testa had originally seen the Crane Building on his own, but he wasn't satisfied with the initial offer. CSL showed him many other spaces around Pittsburgh, but the more spaces he saw the more it seemed like the Crane Building was the place for him. CSL negotiated a new deal that satisfied Mike, while guiding him through the process every step of the way.

When Mike started the firm back in November 1997 it was a one-man show. Now, with the eighth anniversary looming, Testa employs four in the office and this year has had a total of 36 temporary IT staff out in the field. With the IT industry expanding, he expects his company to grow as well.

He's happy to be in the Strip District, especially because so many visitors to the office make comments about the great environment. With the Armstrong Cork Factory development next door, he expects even more activity outside the doors of the Crane Building in the future. According to Mike, "This place is so much cooler than anywhere in Greentree or Wilkins Township. The building is so flexible and has a good mix of tenants. Plus, it's exciting that it's not just a 9 to 5 building; people are coming and going all day!"

Thanks to Mike Testa for his assistance in writing this article.

Testa Consulting

• **Featured Neighborhood: Hazelwood**

Just south of Greenfield and Squirrel Hill on the northern banks of the Monongahela River, not far from the South Side and Homestead (but far from being well-known to most Pittsburghers), lies the community of Hazelwood.

The diverse community of about 13,000 residents has walkable streets and home ownership rates that exceed Pittsburgh's average. The area also has a surprising bit of history. Back in 1792, George Woods, surveyor of the City of Pittsburgh, had built his home in Hazelwood. Now the second oldest in Pittsburgh, the house is now undergoing restoration. In



Woods' time, Hazelwood became a destination for Pittsburgh's wealthy residents, but as the city industrialized, J&L Steel opened a mill in the town (which was later bought by LTV Steel), and the population shifted to wage-earning steel workers who resided in row houses rather than mansions.

Fast forward to the present, when steel no longer supports the local economy and the Second Avenue main street is lined with mostly vacant properties. The main street of Hazelwood is a four block section of Second Avenue between Hazelwood and Elizabeth Streets. Take a short stroll along Second Avenue, and amid many vacant store fronts and buildings you'll run into some friendly faces, including business owners and patrons of the main street pizza shop, convenience and drug stores, and an autobody shop. One of the Hazelwood Main Street's most attractive structures is the Spahr Building, an historic four-story brick structure located adjacent to the newest commercial structure along Second Avenue, Plaza Sophia. The vacant building, owned by the Urban Redevelopment Authority, has been outfitted with a new roof and has updated sub-flooring on each floor. This portion of the business district was designated as part of the Southwestern PA Keystone Opportunity Zone due to its strategic location between the former LTV site and the neighborhood. The Hazelwood Main Street will work with prospective developers throughout the rehabilitation process. But even with approximately 15,000 cars driving through the neighborhood daily, Hazelwood is far from being the destination place that it once was. Residents and property owners alike struggle with the uncertainty about Hazelwood's future.

Two large factors that add to this uncertainty are the eventual construction of the Mon-Fayette Expressway (a proposed toll road that has been in the works for over 20 years), and the future development of the former J&L/LTV Steel site. The community has been assured that the Mon-Fayette will not destroy the main street (the plan is to put it 25 feet below grade and cover it to block sight and sound) and the mixed-use development of the LTV site is planned to connect with the original street grid, which could be a blessing for the Second Avenue businesses. But property owners in particular are unsure of what they should do; should they lease out their property now in an effort to bring life to the main street? Or should they wait until development is imminent so they may be able to sell for a higher rate? And if they should lease now, how can they properly fix up and market their buildings? The Hazelwood Initiative (see below) was created to help businesses lead the revitalization efforts in the community.

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Thanks to Matt Galluzzo of The Hazelwood Initiative for his assistance in writing this article.

● **The Hazelwood Initiative**

The Hazelwood Initiative (HI) is an umbrella organization focused on housing, neighborhood advocacy, and special events. They also run HI-HOPE, a health education and outreach program, and the Hazelwood Main Street Program.



According to Matt Galluzzo, Program Manager for HI, the primary role of HI is aesthetics; they have put up banners along Second Avenue and are working with the URA on façade renovations. Other events include community days, an October 5K run, a business recognition dinner, and a light up night. A recent success for Hazelwood was the completion and dedication of a Sprout Fund mural on the building at the corner of Second Avenue and Elizabeth Streets (go, check it out!).

Hazelwood Initiative understands that in order to bring visitors and businesses into Hazelwood they will need a reason to come. Those that do stop are mostly customers of the Rite Aid or Dairy Mart, and are often on their way across the Glenwood Bridge to Homestead's Waterfront or South Side's business district. While some businesses have been very successful, for example a local chiropractor, the area lacks in the number and diversity of businesses. Matt has taken on the role of advocate and educator to property and business owners, encouraging them to begin marketing their spaces in order to bring in businesses such as cafés, doctors and other essential services, and office-based businesses in general. Through his efforts, property owners are becoming more aware of the process of renting or leasing a space and the importance of marketing.

To learn more about Hazelwood or the Hazelwood Initiative, visit www.hazelwoodmainstreet.org or contact Matt Galluzzo at (412) 422-0690 or hazelwoodmainstreet@hotmail.com.

Hazelwood Main Street

- **A New Face at CSL: Jeb Feldman**

Jeb Feldman came to Pittsburgh to study at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz School after having lived in New Mexico, California and Wisconsin for various stages of his life. After toying with the idea of becoming an architect due to his love of buildings and urban spaces, he redirected his efforts and became focused on the arts.



"I'm lucky to have been surrounded by art and creative people and I felt that I could give back to this community and also be a part of it by working in the management area of the arts, which is why I am currently working on earning my masters degree in arts management. The profound effect that buildings have on me hasn't subsided though, and now I've positioned myself at Cool Space Locator to work over the course of the upcoming year and learn as much as possible about the urban real estate industry. I hope I can help to revitalize our urban spaces through the synergy of real estate and artist communities in the future."

- **About Us**

Cool Space Locator, a project of the Tides Center (PA), is a non-profit real estate organization that connects neighborhoods, properties, and businesses in the revitalization of urban communities. We work in the community development realm to promote revitalization of urban areas and walkable communities and match forward-thinking companies with cool urban spaces to create a sustainable future. Aside from working directly with companies to find space, we work with government, economic and community development agencies, and commercial property owners to help boost the growth of office-based jobs in the great urban commercial districts of Pittsburgh. We are supported by:

- Richard King Mellon Foundation
- The Heinz Endowments
- The Pittsburgh Foundation
- Roy A. Hunt Foundation
- The Urban Redevelopment Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
- City of Pittsburgh, Mayor's Office