



No room for gloom

(Created: Thursday, March 26, 2009 7:48 PM CDT)

Frisco businesses focus on basics to stay above economic fray

By Jan Bellamy

Staff writer

The current economic storm may drop some hail on Frisco businesses but not necessarily knock them to their foundations.

Some local successes may reflect national trends, others spring-break youthful spending and/or tax refund checks making their way into local cash registers.

"Our clientele is growing," said Ruchi Srivastava, owner of Frosted Java, 3685 Preston Road. "We've been able to expand our offerings from coffee and tea to food because people are coming and staying, visiting and working for several hours."

Another business reporting sales are up is Goodman Supply and its home-furnishings showroom, Skanadario, 9750 John W. Elliott Drive.

"We are seeing retail traffic pick up," said Jeffrey Goodman, general manager and vice president of Goodman Supply. "We have more walk-in traffic, more sales of new kitchens and laundry sets."

Goodman said it's generally accepted sales for remodeling homes go up when new home construction goes down. A typical higher-end remodel of a kitchen through Skanadario may run \$30,000, but frivolous spending is not an issue.

"People look at buying new appliances as an investment," he said. "They are looking not just for a washing machine, but a machine that will use water and energy efficiently while lasting 20 years."

Srivastava's caffeinated success reflects one of three business categories The Wall Street Journal recently reported doing better than expected since stocks crashed their way into a daily, national conversation: high-end coffee shops; cellular wireless and gadget shops; and online sales.

Starbucks' stock crashed earlier this year and everyone thought the espresso cups had been put on the shelf for good. But shares have recently jumped back up 55 percent since management started working hard to grow customer base.

Cell phones and wireless services have seen shares jump about 40 percent, according to the Wall Street Journal. And local Radio Shack managers said off the record that customer traffic remains good and steady; however, Radio Shack corporate spokesperson Mindy Dominguez said the publically held company does not comment on sales figures.

An independent reflection of higher sales in these and other retail areas could be confirmed or put to rest when sales tax revenue for March is tallied. Final figures won't be reported by the City of Frisco until May, however, as there is a two-month lag time between sales and reports from the comptroller's office.

"If sales and sales tax revenues are up, that's just fabulous," said Dana Baird, communications director for the City of Frisco. "As of the end of January, Frisco sales tax collections were down."

Meanwhile, in an effort to make everyone's dreams come true, Frisco businesses are focused on customer

service.

"We have to take more measures to bring the customer in, be vigilant in our marketing, and very carefully pick our product lines," Srivastava said, who opened Frosted Java in December 2008.

"We opened just as the economy was sinking," said Srivastava, a native of India who came to America with her husband, Atul, 16 years ago. "We knew business would be slow at first, but it's definitely growing. We have 100 to 150 people per day."

"This is all basic economics," she added. "What goes down will come up. It's a cycle."

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