

PROGRESS 2009

A Look Back...

A Look Ahead...

A Supplement to
The **ADVANCE**

Healthy Business

2008 was a banner year for nutrition business

BY TRAN
LONGMOORE
Advance Editor

In 2007, most of the new business development in Blisfield Village occurred on the west end of town.

In 2008, Blisfield Village's borders actually expanded to accommodate the year's biggest new business development — the expansion of Uckele Health & Nutrition. In May, the longtime business completed the construction of an 18,000-square-foot expansion to the original 15,000 square-foot facility. The facility houses manufacturing areas, a retail store and offices. To help make the development possible, Blisfield Village annexed part of the Silberhorn Road property and awarded a tax abatement to Uckele Health & Nutrition. In just over three years, the company, specializing in equine and human nutritional supplements, has doubled the number of people it employs, from 25 to 50.

Despite a tough economy, the company is growing. Mike Uckele, president and CEO of Uckele Health & Nutrition, projects business is up by 25 percent since last year. The biggest area of growth has been products for the equine market.

"We manufacture and create lines for other businesses, and they are doing well. We're just continuing to feed them," said Uckele, a certified nutritionist with a degree in business administration from Michigan State University.

There is also growth in the area of business that focuses on nutritional supplements for humans. Uckele, whose grandfather



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Uckele Health & Nutrition CEO and President Mike Uckele and customer service representative Maria Johnson in the show room of the company's new facility on Silberhorn Highway.

William Uckele founded the business in the 1960s strictly to serve livestock, estimated business in the human side grew between 12 and 15 percent.

Uckele Health & Nutrition will continue to grow the human side of the business. The company is rebranding its product brand and focusing on nutrigenomics.

What is nutrigenomics? "When you talk about nutrigenomics, you're

talking about food and nutrition sending information to your genes," Uckele said. "Some people say your genes are your genes and you can't change them. Well, that's true. But you can send messages to your genes. You can go down the road of health or road of disease," Uckele said. "We're trying to break this all down and understand which gene dictates certain responses." Uckele said the compa-

ny is creating 35 to 40 nutrigenomic products for people to help combat specific problems. The company uses techniques like hair sampling, for example, to help determine what a person might need in a supplement. "We don't work magic. We don't have treatments. But we will talk about supplements, diets and programs that promote optimal health," Uckele said.

Uckele Health & Nutrition provides its products for some of the world's top athletes. Uckele estimated the company provides products for 125 professional athletes in the NHL, NFL or NBA. Uckele also provides supplements to a doctor who works with Major League Baseball players. Despite an economy that looks gloomier with each passing day, Uckele

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SPECIAL PULL-OUT SECTION