



MICHAEL Flores and his daughter, Alisha Thibodeau, of the new CityCenter Program. (Independent Photo/KAREN MEAD-ELFORD)

## CityCenter Program

Michael Flores, Independent Newsgroup owner, and his daughter, Alisha Thibodeau have launched a new community development program, CityCenter. An online interactive mapping website, CityCenter was created to help small businesses and communities have access to the high-end branding options that are normally reserved for larger businesses and cities.

By linking in, the businesses and organizations are given the benefit of an individual strong web presence while simultaneously marketing the entire Owosso community. Those that choose to link into CityCenter will benefit from expanded exposure on state and national levels.

Flores and Thibodeau are both deeply ingrained in the marketing industry. Flores has owned and operated the Independent Newsgroup for 21 years. Thibodeau holds a bachelor's in Communications and Marketing. She is currently working toward her master's in Public Administration at U of M-Flint.

Their constant commitment to helping small businesses and organizations succeed led to the concept of CityCenter. "While traveling, I had to dig through five to 10 sites in order to find relevant information about the community," says Flores. This revelation got him thinking that there had to be a way to nest all of the community information in one place and market a community as a whole unit.

CityCenter, a proprietary program, was developed after a year of brainstorming on the best possible way to achieve the main goal: to provide business owners and rural community organizations with high-end branding and marketing options intended to simultaneously draw outside foot traffic and capitalize on the local market.

Throughout the incubation period of CityCenter, there have been several key community members that have been a tremendous help and support.

Memorial Healthcare and Baker College of Owosso have demonstrated exceptional insight and support to the community of Owosso through their willingness to support CityCenter in its inception phase.

Justin Horvath and Brent Jones of the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership have provided invaluable time and help with market research and concept development. Alongside the SEDP, the Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce and Owosso Main Street saw the value of CityCenter early on and have provided support and help.

The Cook Family Foundation has imparted guidance for future development and project support.

The CityCenter site is brought to you courtesy of area advertisers who have a passion for the development of Owosso. Thank you for supporting them. Please take advantage of their specials and let them know that you support CityCenter.

## ALL TO ONE DAY

On Saturday evening, July 31, tires will smoke the pavement in downtown Laingsburg as the Chad Hill Annual Memorial Cruise Night moves to Saturday night in its fourth year.

The move from Friday night will bring together all three of Laingsburg's major mid-summer events – The Laingsburg Business Association Pancake Breakfast, the Laingsburg Classic Car Show and Hill Cruise Night – for a day-long celebration.

The LBA Pancake Breakfast kicks things off when the hot cakes and sausages are served 8 to 11 a.m. The Classic Car Show, hosted by Looking Glass Community Services, goes until 2 p.m.

Wrapping up the day's festivities is the Chad Hill 4th Annual Cruise Night, which begins at 4 p.m., and continues into the evening. This is an annual fundraiser for the daughters of Chad Hill, a local car enthusiast who was tragically killed in a work-related accident at the age of 26. Proceeds from the Cruise help fund his daughters' future education.

The night is filled with excitement with the Cruise around the 'Burg and the Burn Outs in Roosevelt Row, where for a donation of \$5, cars line up and one-by-one burn their tires and smoke 'em to wrap up a day of fun, food and entertainment.

## HIGHLIGHT

CHICKEN Dinner, 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, July 31, at the First United Methodist Church of New Lothrop, 7495 Orchard

Street, New Lothrop, featuring baked chicken. This will be during the annual New Lothrop Car Show. Adults \$8; children ages 12 younger \$3.50.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Evening Out with Ben at Mootzies Wed., July 21  
Call For Tickets 989-413-2538
  - Vernon Cafe, Friday, July 23, 9am-11am
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- ## August 3rd

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