

County to revisit real estate holdings

FitzGerald open to sale of properties as he looks to address government space needs

By JAY MILLER
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The new Cuyahoga County government is picking up on the old government's attempt to rethink its real estate portfolio and to incorpo-

rate its space needs into broader redevelopment efforts in downtown Cleveland.

County Executive Ed FitzGerald said last week his administration is working on a strategy that would address the county's long-

standing need to find a new home for many of its workers, dispose of some of the property it owns and be a catalyst for other private development.

Mr. FitzGerald told Crain's he plans to reopen the conversation regarding the best solutions for the real estate puzzle this Wednesday, April 6, during his State of the County address, which will be held before a City Club of Cleveland audience at

the Marriott at Key Center.

"We're trying to come up with a process that's really going to throw it open to anybody who can come up with a creative package," Mr. FitzGerald said. "You might, for example, have somebody that owns a building that we might want to do a swap with."

"We want to see if there are ways to either sell (buildings) off piecemeal or ways to package them to-

gether," he said.

Two county-owned properties are of particular interest to the real estate community: the Ameritrust complex at East Ninth Street and Euclid Avenue, and the four-story county administration building on Ontario Street that sits next to the site of the new convention center and medical merchandise mart, which are under construction.

A transformation of the vacant

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Family Owned business

For the second year, *Crain's Cleveland Business* profiles nine of Northeast Ohio's family owned businesses, from their starts generations ago to today. These companies address how they've navigated the difficult dynamics of working with family, and a difficult economy-that has forced them to adjust.

ROUNDING OUT THE ROSTER

Second generation

- International Transport Svcs, Inc., Cleveland
- Logan Clutch Corp., Westlake
- Mar-Bal Inc., Chagrin Falls

Third generation

- House of LaRose, Brecksville.
- Leimkuehler Inc., Cleveland
- PFI Displays Inc., Rittman

Fourth generation

- Federal Metal Co., Oakwood Village
- Lucky Shoes, Fairlawn
- Speed Exterminating Co., Cleveland

Leimkuehler Inc.

Cleveland ♦ third generation

By TIMOTHY MAGAW
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Just like most teenagers, Greg Leimkuehler wasn't sure what he wanted to do for a living.

He'd worked in construction for a period and learned pretty quickly that he was good with his hands. But it wasn't until he started helping out in 2000 at Leimkuehler Inc. - a prosthetics and orthotics company in Cleveland owned by his family - that he realized his true calling.

Greg, who was 17 at the time, took a patient home one day, and at that moment he realized the company that was founded by his grandfather, Paul, and now run by his father, Bob, was something on which he could build a career. Greg, now 28 and a certified orthotist, is finishing his residency work to become a certified prosthetist, and he hopes one day to follow in his father's footsteps and take over the company.

"It takes time and work, but we really do everything to get our patients back to what they used to do and what they would like to do," Greg said.

Paul Leimkuehler, a World War II veteran who lost a por-

tion of his leg during the Battle of the Bulge, founded the company in 1948. At the time, there were only about three or four employees, but since then, the size of the company has grown to about 25 employees. It has locations in Cleveland, Lyndhurst, North Royalton and Akron, as well as a mobile unit that goes to patients at their homes, hospitals or nursing homes.

The industry's technology dramatically has changed since the company was founded. Many of the prostheses were outfitted with wood and rawhide, a process that Bob Leimkuehler, 59, characterized as "very labor intensive." Some of the old instruments still sit in a conference room at the company's headquarters on Detroit Avenue on Cleveland's West Side.

Bob took over as the company's president in 1983 - the same year Greg was born. At Leimkuehler Inc., it's truly a family affair. Bob met his wife, Rosie, at the company in the early 1970s, and each of the couple's four children worked stints at the company.

As the company has evolved, so has the health care industry. For one, regulations dictating reimbursements from Medicare,



Greg, Rosie and Bob Leimkuehler at the company's West Side headquarters

JESSE KRAMER

Medicaid and other insurers increasingly are becoming complex. Also, many insurers are scaling back reimbursement rates for many of the services Leimkuehler Inc. provides, which Rosie said forces the company to "work faster and more efficiently."

Rosie, 55, now the company's vice president, left the company in 1970s and pursued other opportunities, but she returned in 2005 after beating cancer. She had been pursuing a nursing certificate at Case Western Reserve University but decided it made more

sense to go back to work with her husband. She's now a certified orthotic and mastectomy fitter.

As for Greg, working under his parents' noses isn't necessarily a bad thing. Occasionally, they'll even bring him some leftover food - something any 20-something might appreciate. Many of Leimkuehler Inc.'s other employees have been around for decades, and those relationships mean a lot to him.

"They're kind of like my family, too, because I've known them my whole life," Greg said.

Working with amputees is no easy task, the Leimkuehlers said. It's not as simple as fixing a broken leg, as it takes a fair amount of tact and sensitivity to treat patients who have lost something as vital as a limb. Still, the difficult job didn't deter Bob from following his father's lead or Greg from doing the same. It was just a natural way to extend the family's legacy.

"It all seemed to be the right thing to do," Bob said.