

Saving film/video memories Flicko's growth goals aiming for 25 stores in 2006

By Mike Pare Staff Writer

Michael Morell says he likes preserving the heritage of people who walk into his Fort Oglethorpe business.

"We realized the importance of family preservation," said the owner of Flicko's Video Workshop, which specializes in preserving film and video. "It's priceless stuff. I've got Kleenex here just in case."

Flicko's converts old film, video or albums into more modern and sustainable copies on DVDs or CDs.

Mr. Morell opened the business with wife Kimberly last fall, and they were recently cited by the company for special recognition based on such factors as sales, increasing customer base and satisfaction, he said.

Flicko's, a Louisville, Ky.-based company, wants to grow by opening new franchises, said spokesman Doug Netherton. Flicko's has four franchise-owned stores now and one run by the company, he said.

The goal is to have 25 stores up and running in the next year, Mr. Netherton said.

He said the franchise fee and the cost of getting into business is "reasonable." The company estimates an investment of between \$71,000 and \$119,000.

"We want to give people a chance to get into business without having to run up a lot of debt," Mr. Netherton said.

In addition to preserving individuals' memories, Mr. Morell said the company does a lot of work with schools, such as creating yearbook videoclips.

Mr. Morell said the store has business accounts, noting that some companies order DVDs to give to their customers. Also, the store can produce slide show presentations or commercials, he said.

Additionally, the business works with audio, taking old LPs or cassettes and putting those on CDs.

Mr. Morell expects business in his second year to grow by about 50 percent. He said 40 percent of his business is by referral while another 40 percent is from repeat customers.

The owner said one feature of Flicko's is that store personnel can do the work, or individuals can do it themselves on in-store equipment. "You don't have to send it somewhere," said the businessman.

Jim Queen, of Chattanooga, was in the store recently trying to put together a video montage that he hoped to show at the rehearsal dinner for his son's wedding. He said he found the business in the telephone book.

"I saw ... it could do what I wanted to do," Mr. Queen said. "He has done a real professional job."

Mr. Morell said his customers come not just from North Georgia but from Chattanooga and as far away as Cleveland, Tenn. He hopes to open another store in the future.

"One of our goals here is to have a second store," Mr. Morell said, who is from Detroit but came to the Chattanooga area about nine years ago when the company for which he then worked relocated him.

A former disc jockey, he said he always enjoyed the technical part of that business, so the Flicko's franchise was a fit.

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Staff Photo by Marcella Colburn

Michael Morell, owner of Flicko's, a video store on Battlefield Parkway in Fort Oglethorpe, sets up equipment to transfer a customer's family photos to DVD on Thursday.