

Ideas & Information You Can Build On

Breaking Ground

The newly-remodeled and expanded Strack & Van Til Food Market in DeMotte.



The Hamstra Group Remodels and Expands New Store for Strack & Van Til in DeMotte

In September of 2021, Indiana Grocery Group, which operates Strack & Van Til, purchased the former Tysen's Country Market in the DeMotte Plaza on State Highway 23 in DeMotte. Jeff Strack, company president and CEO of the grocery store chain, said the company is poised to grow throughout Northwest Indiana after undergoing a major reorganization.

"After four years of rebuilding our company, we are now looking for the right opportunities to grow our brand," Strack said.

And, Strack's team knew the DeMotte Plaza was the perfect place for this 93-year-old grocery store chain to grow. As it turns out, The Hamstra Group owns the DeMotte

Plaza—a busy 75,870-square-foot retail center. So, when Strack & Van Til decided to purchase the old Tysen's store, The Hamstra Group was ready to help rebrand, renovate, and expand the store.

Construction began in the Fall of 2021 and consisted of remodeling the existing space and expanding the store from 35,000 square feet to 50,000 square feet. Crews opened up an adjacent storefront in the plaza and expanded the rear portion of the

building to create more space. The renovation included giving the space a new, modern look with polished concrete floors, exposed painted ceilings, and new, efficient light fixtures.

Project Manager Greg Hamstra noted that the biggest challenge of the project was completing the renovation and construction while the store was fully operational. "It was a challenge to perform the work while the store was open. One of our main goals was to



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Strack & Van Til in DeMotte... *continued from page 1*

minimize disruption for employees as well as shoppers. Maintaining safety and cleanliness were also very important to us throughout the project.”

Work was completed in May of 2022 and a grand opening and ribbon cutting was held in June.

Hamstra’s Jim Seegers served as the project superintendent. “Strack and Van Til were great to work with during all phases of the work,” said Seegers. “We had to closely coordinate relocating shelving and products as well as the materials we needed to complete our work.”

At the ribbon cutting, Strack & Van Til Chief Operating Officer Dave Wilkinson said, “Customers will not believe they are walking into the same store. From floor to ceiling, wall to wall, everything has changed with many thousands of additional items to purchase throughout the store.”

Jeff Strack said DeMotte is the type of community his company will do well in and he “look(s) forward to a long relationship with the community.”



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Ancient Map Found In Cellar

A stone slab held privately for more than 100 years has turned out to be the oldest known map of European territory, the *Sci-News* website reports. The Bronze Age map, about 13 feet long by seven feet wide, dates from 2150–1600 B.C., and was originally found in France in 1900. It went to a private collection, then a museum, and was ultimately found in a castle cellar in 2014.

The slab appears to depict an area along the river Odet, and the central motif suggests an enclosure in an area with three river springs—the Odet, the Isole, and the Stêr Laër. Archeologists believe the ancient map may have been used to manage the territory and control its land. The slab was used in a burial at the end of the early Bronze Age, and markings that seem to represent the distribution of elite graves in the territory could be linked to soil fertility.

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly



Jumpstart Your Morning To Be More Productive At Work

Are you as productive as you could be at work? It depends on how you start your day. To get off on the right foot, follow this advice from the *Resume.io* website:

- **Empty your mind.** Get rid of extraneous thoughts that might distract you up front. If necessary, write down any ideas or worries and then set them aside so you can focus on your first task.
- **Don't check your email right away.** Spend 30 minutes or so on something productive before looking at your emails. You'll avoid getting sucked into nonessential tasks that can derail your productivity.
- **Avoid meetings.** Don't call a meeting first thing in the morning. We spend enough unproductive time in meetings as it is. Block out a meeting-free zone on your schedule, and attend only the most essential early morning meetings.
- **Stand up.** Instead of settling into your chair first thing, take a short walk or use a standing desk for the first 10 minutes of your day. This can help you feel more energetic and empowered.
- **Use natural light.** Open your blinds to let in the sunshine. It'll help you wake up and feel more alert. If that's not an option at your workspace, invest in a lamp that simulates sunlight.
- **Set—and share—deadlines.** Let someone else know when you expect to finish an important task. Keeping it to yourself makes letting it slide too easy. Having someone in on it will help you feel accountable, even though it's just a co-worker with no authority over you.
- **Start one at a time.** Don't try to accomplish several morning tasks at once—no matter how easy they are. Focus on just one, finish it, and move onto the next. Allocate blocks of time for specific tasks, with shorter spans in between for miscellaneous jobs.

“The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.”

—Ken Blanchard

Try These Numbers On For Size

You think high school algebra was hard? Try wrapping your mind around these amazing numbers, courtesy of the *Cracked* website:

- To write the largest known prime number in a straight line, you would need a sheet of paper 23 miles long.
- Americans use 100,000,000,000 plastic shopping bags a year, enough to stretch end-to-end around the equator twice every day.
- A blue whale can eat up to 40 million small krill a day—about 7,900 pounds, which is more than the weight of a Hummer.
- A Rubik's Cube has 45,252,003,274,489,856,000 possible configurations.
- There are 12.1 trillion digits of Pi known right now. A piece of paper needed to write them in a straight line would stretch to the sun and back.
- LEGO manufactures 125 million bricks a day, more than the number of banknotes the U.S. prints in a day (38 million).
- Beetles represent 30% of all known animal species, with more than 300,000 species currently identified.
- People send 205 billion emails every day. If you were to print out each one on a separate sheet of office paper—which would consume 25 million trees—the stack would stretch halfway around the equator.

What Makes A Leader?

Leadership calls for the right perspective on people. The website of the *MIT Sloan School of Management* shares these words of wisdom from top leaders on how to lead:

- **Carol Cohen, Cognizant:** “Your long-term success is not just determined by what you achieve alone, but also by how you empower, engage, support, and elevate your colleagues and teams in the ecosystem around you.”
- **George Westerman, MIT Sloan:** “The ability to envision and drive change is just as important as the ability to work with technology. If you don’t have both, you can’t succeed in this world.”
- **Craig Robinson, WeWork:** “Creating, aligning, and empowering diverse teams is one of the best ways to discover and develop new ideas.”
- **Hal Gregersen, MIT Sloan:** “Most leaders excel at thinking, ‘Oh, here are the tasks to be done,’ but they often don’t step back to consider how specific roles are changing and what that means for people experiencing a significant identity shift at work.”
- **Doug Ready, MIT Sloan:** “Go out on the limb, that’s where all the fruit is. Take a few risks—trust that your people will admire you for doing so. Leadership is a privilege. Embrace it as you build a community of leaders in this new economy.”

*“In school, you’re taught a lesson and then given a test.
In life, you’re given a test that teaches you a lesson.”*

—Tom Bodett

Up Your Networking Game

Networking is crucial to succeeding in your career. You need connections with people in all sorts of industries, people who can offer you advice, support, and sometimes work. Networking is one of the most powerful skills you can have in your career and is a skill that can be learned. How do you go about building the kind of network you want? Follow these guidelines from the *Silicon Republic* website:

- **Networking should be mutually beneficial.** Don’t go into it thinking only what you can get. To build useful, long-term relationships, you have to be available to help your contacts as much as you hope to get help from them. Don’t ask for favors. Volunteer your service and expertise so people see you as a reliable partner.
- **Join diverse groups.** You meet people for your network by getting involved in industry associations, trade groups, and the like. Look for groups that have a diverse range of people. The wider your network, the better your access to information you can use and people with experiences and insights you might not encounter elsewhere.
- **Present solutions.** Position yourself as an expert by speaking at conferences and offering solutions to long-standing problems. Getting visibility will attract people to you. You’ll be able to interact with a wider variety of experts in other fields who can share experiences and ideas while benefitting from your own.
- **Say yes to opportunities.** You’ve got to put yourself out there to prove yourself to the people you want in your network. That means volunteering your services and saying yes to requests to help. Be willing to take on new responsibilities when asked. This shows you’re a team player committed to everyone’s success, not just your own.
- **Don’t be daunted if you’ve changed careers.** Networking can be just as daunting if you’ve decided to make a career change later in life. Try to understand the constituent parts of your new role, identify the people who have the most knowledge about that topic, and approach them. Ask if it’s okay to reach out to them with questions or, better still, try to schedule a regular time with them where you have a chance to build up a bank of questions.



Test Your Knowledge

1. Where are lobsters’ bladders located?
2. In 1878, Alexander Graham Bell suggested answering the telephone with which greeting?
3. At an average of 10 hours 42 minutes per week, which country’s citizens spend the most time reading?
4. Which is the state dance of 24 U.S. states?
5. Which came first: alcohol or the wheel?
6. Which word is understood in all languages?
7. A team of chemists described which smell as “a combination of grassy notes with a tang of acids and a hint of vanilla over an underlying mustiness?”
8. Which is the only continent to have land in all four hemispheres?
9. *Paraskevidekatriophobia* is the fear of what?
10. What was the first item sold on eBay?
11. Theodore Roosevelt’s daughter Alice had a pet snake. What was the snake’s name?

1. In their heads. 2. “Ahoj.” 3. India. 4. The Square Dance. 5. Alcohol. 6. “Huh?” 7. The smell of old books. 8. Africa. 9. Friday the 13th. 10. A broken laser pointer. 11. Emily Spinach.

—Mental Floss