Computer firm aids small businesses

By Portia E. Badham
AFRO Staff Writer

Metro Computer Services, a new black-owned computer firm, is making strides to aid small businesses.

The firm, owned by Raymond Bantum and Daryl Mosby, offers data processing services including financial statements, depreciation and amortization schedules, word processing, mailing lists and even biorhythm charts.

The owners are seeking out small businesses that they feel can best benefit from their services.

"Quite often the proprietor of a small business does not possess the necessary accounting expertise or time to generate a meaningful set of financial statements," said Bantum.

"The alternative is to contract the services of a CPA or an accountant to perform these tasks. The problem here is that many small businesspersons do not have the necessary capital to afford a CPA or accountant."

That's where Metro Services comes in. Both the owners have tried to maintain low operating costs so that their services can be available and affordable to the small business.

Bantum, who worked as a senior assistant auditor with the accounting firm, Deloitte, Haskins and Sells, left in December to develop plans for his own company.

"I saw there was a market that was untapped," said Bantum. "I wanted to put my expertises back into the community."

Bantum was joined in his efforts by a former classmate, Daryl Mosby who had his own marketing firm. The two teamed up eights months ago and combined their expertises to get Metro Services off the ground.

The company began operation in May.

Both the owners feel they are coming in the technological field at a time when it is wide open to anyone with the experience, especially minorities.

Black Enterprise magazine in its June issue on the top 100 businesses, states, "One way of changing the status of blacks is to acquire and use information. The computer is the key.

"The only way to take part in the next social revolution— the Information Age— is through the computer. Used with skill and understanding, the computer could be the great equalizer for blacks in the coming decades."

Mosby, vice president of the company and in charge of marketing, stated that the firm is already expanding its clients to New York and New Jersey and is developing a possible nationwide service for Amway distributors.

Other plans of the firm include using students from Coppin State College on a work study program and developing an educational classroom computer package for the Baltimore city public school system.

AFRO photo by Roman Hankewycz

BUSINESS PARTNERS — Baryl Mosby and Raymond Bantum who were high school classmates came together several months ago to combine their expertises and formed Metro Computer Services which provides data processing services to various companies.

BTR Realty

Directors of BTR Realty, Inc. have declared a two-for-one split-up of the common stock of the company in the form of a stock dividend distribution.

The new shares will be distributed on Sept. 4 to holders of record on Aug. 17.

Energy Store offers different kind of power

The Energy Store in Columbia, Md. has installed a 50-foot windmill for use in generating electric power.

One of the few businesses on the East Coast to harness the wind for energy, the store is currently saving about $25 a month on its utility bills with its Enertech wind-powered generator.

Unlike old-style windmills which utilize a storage battery, this one (which can be seen on Red Branch Road off Route 108 in Columbia) produced 115 volt AC 60-cycle electricity at all operating windspeeds.

Because this electricity is identifical to utility power, it can flow directly to lights and appliances.

Any current not used by The Energy Store is purchased by the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company under a 1980 federal law requiring utility companies to buy excess power generated by private individuals.

When the wind speed is fairly high and the lights in the store are off, the dials on the electric meter actually spin backwards.

Suitable for both commercial and residential installation (although they do require a fairly large lot), windmills have already been approved for use by such local utility companies as Potomac Edison, Baltimore Gas and Electric, Pepco and Delmarva Power and Light.

The cost of installation is about $7,000 to $8,000, although at least 40 percent of the expense comes back to the consumer in the form of federal tax credit.

According to Energy Store owner, George Hunter, "You can save about $30 a month on your utility bill when the average wind speed is 14 miles per hour.

But if you live in a windy area—on the bay, for example, you can save considerably more."

The Energy Store, opened in 1976, specializes in alternative energy products such as solar hot water systems and water heating pumps.

Residential units sales decrease

The Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors reports that the number of residential units sold in June was 938 as compared to 1,276 in June 1980, representing a 26 percent decrease.

The dollar volume for June 1981 was $58,777,609; a 23 percent decrease from the $77,291,776 figure for June 1980, and the average sale price of a house was $62,663 in June 1981 as compared to $60,573 one year earlier.

The Board of Realtors also reports that the year to date totals show the average price of a home to be $63,198 in 1981 as compared to $57,684 in 1980.

The total number of units sold in 1981 is 6,163 as compared to 6,511 in 1980, representing a 5 percent decrease for the same time periods of January through June.

Dollar volume increased three percent from $375,578,230 in 1980 to $389,480,822 in 1981.

Omni cigarettes aimed at blacks

Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company will soon "hit the streets" of Baltimore with a new cigarette aimed primarily at black and white female smokers.

Omni, a slim low-tar menthol cigarette, will make its debut in Baltimore July 20 and later in the month in Atlanta. If the new cigarette, which is one of four manufactured by Liggett & Myers, makes it here, marketing will be scheduled in Memphis, Houston and Philadelphia.

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Our Supermarket, Shake 'N Bake Center

New projects highlight Upton

By Sue Williams
AFRO Staff Writer

When Our Supermarket opens in the Upton area of the city in early September, it will be one of only three major supermarket outlets located in an inner city neighborhood here.

Our Supermarket, part of the Upton Urban Renewal Plan which began over ten years ago, is just about completed. When it opens, it will provide jobs for youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years of age, and will allow the market to be eventually owned by the young people through a program known as Employee Ownership Trust. Through this program, the youth employed at the market will earn stock that will eventually allow them ownership.

Lean R. Boone, spokesperson and key organizer for the Upton area, told the AFRO that the market had its journeys to travel before it came to fruition.

An initial grant of $10,000 awarded by the Corporation of Youth Enterprises in Washington, D.C., allowed the Upton planners to do a feasibility study on the possibility of such a market in the inner city.

The 183 - acre Upton area, bounded on the south by Biddle - George Sts., on the north by Bloom Street, by McCulloh Street on the east and Fremont on the west, was in the midst of an urban upheaval in keeping with the general trend of renaissance going on in the city as a whole.

But Boone and others throughout the community realized that renaissance without staunch consideration of the people and their very special needs would be beautification without reason, in essence, a wasted effort.

After carefully considering the things that were needed, matching them up with the things that were missing, the supermarket came up as a primary goal.

People approached about the market idea were not overly enthusiastic about it, Boone remembers.

"I can understand why," she said. "We were talking about dreams, and the business world, people don't deal with dreams."

Boone approached several sources seeking financial backing for the market idea and had been turned down by them all before she finally looked to the Corporation for Youth Enterprises in D.C.

"Their goals were in keeping with ours," she said, explaining that the organization's goal is to provide economic growth for young people.

CYE agreed to finance the project for $1.3 million. The stipulations of that initial agreement made between CYE and the Upton planners was that the supermarket was to be staffed by young people, all of whom would earn stocks in the supermarket by working there.

No stocks would be sold, Boone said. At the end of a set period (in this instance, 4 years), total ownership was to be turned over to the youth.

If at the end of that four - year - period, during which the young people will not only work in the store but receive education in the basics of economic survival and success, the planners feel the youth are not quite ready for ownership, negotiations will resume with CYE to continue education until they are ready.

"The kids who work here will learn more than a job," Boone said. "Their working there will be an investment."

Boone acknowledged that without the input and interest of CYE the supermarket would never have come to be. She said that local banks would not finance the project, despite the fact that CYE had already given the Upton planners $1.3 million.

"I assumed that when you had a certain amount of money, it would open doors," she said. "That wasn't the case."

Boone eventually had to get the project financed by the Hemisphere National Bank, a Hispanic bank located in Washington, D.C. After that hurdle, the biggest obstacles were out of the way, and Our Supermarket began to move from dream to reality status.

ALMOST COMPLETE — "Our Supermarket," the only major supermarket in the Upton area, is due to open by early September. (AFRO PHOTO by Roman Hankewycz)

Copies of city budget available

A limited number of copies of "City of Baltimore Fiscal 1982 Departmental Budget Requests and Board of Estimates Recommendations' will be made available at cost to private organizations and individuals by the Bureau of the Budget and Management Research.

The soft-cover. 900-page publication contains the Board of Estimates recommendations for both the operating and capital budgets which were submitted to the Board of Estimates April 15.

To order a volume, write to: Budget Division Supervisor, 442 City Hall, Baltimore, Md. 21202.

Mail orders should be accompanied by a check or money order (payable to the Director of Finance) for $23 plus $1.55 for postage. Maryland residents must add $1.15 state sales tax.

City of Baltimore budget publications which will be made available in the future include the "Fiscal 1982 Departmental Budget Requests and Board of Estimates Recommendations" on or about May 15 and the "Budget in Brief" at $3.50 in the fall.

SBA to expand '503' program

Michael Cardenas, administrator of the U.S Small Business Administration, has announced plans to expand the agency's '503' program.

The '503' or certified development company program is designed to assist small businesses entering into economic development projects.

Under the program, which began with a July 1980 amendment to the Small Business Investment Act, SBA certifies development companies to provide long term, fixed asset financing to small businesses.

The financing may not exceed 50 percent, with a $500,000 ceiling of the total cost of a project. The remaining 50 percent must come from non-federal sources.

The '503' program encourgaes private sector involvement in job creation and economic recovery within a community," said Cardenas. "The program definitely is in keeping with President Reagan's initiatives and the direction that the SBA will take in the future."

To date, one '503' development company has been approved in Maryland BEDCO, under the direction of Bernie Berkowitz, has been active in the Baltimore city area

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